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Tilak Varma (pic) scored 120 n.o off 47 balls and Sanju Samson 109 n.o off 56 balls as India posted 283/1 against S Africa, its 2nd highest T20I score ever and a T20 record in S Africa. India won by 135 runs to clinch the 4-match series 3-1 | P 21

BCCI seeks ICC action on PCB's CT tour in POK

BCCI secretary Jay Shah has raised objections with ICC on PCB's plan to promote Champions Trophy by conducting a "trophy tour" in POK. "PCB has no business sharing the schedule because it has to come from ICC," said a source. The trophy is to be taken to Skardu, Murree, Hunza and Muzaffarabad in POK. P 21

LG for 'extra vigil' on illegal immigrants

Citing reports of a "sudden spurt" in the number of illegal immigrants in the city and Aadhara being made on the basis of fake documents, LG issued instructions to Delhi Police to remain "extra vigilant". P 5

Trump picks RFK Jr for health secy

US president-elect Trump picked anti-vaccine activist Robert F Kennedy Jr for secretary of health. The nomination, which sent drugmakers' stocks plunging, is subject to Senate confirmation. P 17

Govt staggers office timings to improve air

Grap-3, Day 1: AQI Marginally Better At 'V Poor'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: After staying in the 'severe' category for two days, Delhi's air quality improved marginally to the high end of 'very poor' on Friday, in part due to a pick-up in wind speed in the afternoon. However, air quality continued to be severe in many areas of the capital. Meanwhile, on Day 1 of

FULL COVERAGE: P 2, 3

Grap 3 restrictions kicking in, Delhi govt announced fresh measures to mitigate the high levels of pollution in the capital. It staggered office timings of central, city and municipal corporation staff and pressed 106 shuttle buses into service, many of these to pick up govt staff from their locations. The average air quality index (AQI), on a scale of 0 to

In Dantewada, dreams of liquid gold turn to dust

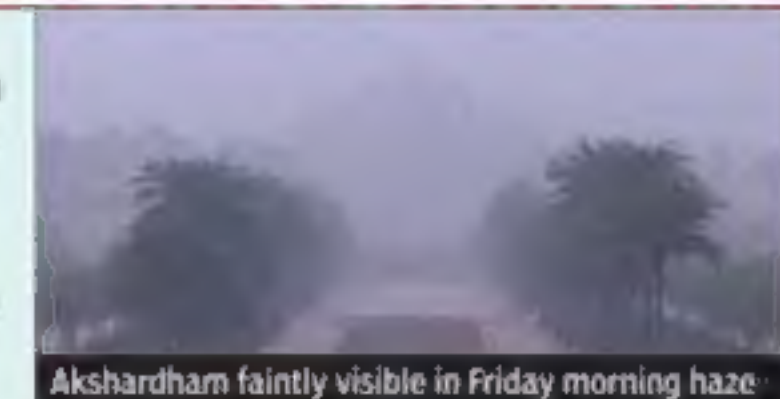
Raipur: For a few hours on Friday morning, a cluster of villages in Maoist-hit Dantewada thought it was a miracle. That they had struck liquid gold, and their wells had magically turned into oil wells overnight.

Villagers drew out buckets of petrol. Nearby villages joined in too. There was plenty to go around! The land rates would skyrocket, they thought. But the euphoria vapourised as cops and district officials swarmed the hamlets and went door to door, asking for the petrol to be returned, reports Rashmi Drolia.

►Power supply shut, P 20

MANY AREAS STILL IN 'SEVERE' ZONE

► To reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, MCD offices to operate from 8.30am to 5pm, central govt from 9am to 5.30pm. Delhi govt from 10am to 6.30pm. CM Atishi said: ► Under Grap 3, Delhi govt to run 106 shuttle buses, 40 of these to pick up govt employees from different locations in city



Akshardham faintly visible in Friday morning haze. 8.3L Vehicles Off | Under Grap 3, 8.8L vehicles in Delhi (1.5L petrol, 2.3L diesel) ineligible to run. Noida has 2L such vehicles. Ghaziabad 2.5L.

VERY POOR SCORES

396 Delhi AQI on Friday, back in 'very poor' zone after 2 days of 'severe' air. 367 Avg AQI during Nov 1-15, better than last year (376) but worse than 345 in 2022

IMD said smog conditions continued almost throughout the morning. The city saw moderate fog and a further dip in temperature, which slowed pollution dispersion. The minimum visibility at Palam was 500 metres between 6.30am and 8.30am, which moderated to 600m by 9am.

►Stubble share, P 2

Lanka prez-led coalition wins 2/3rds seats in parl

Sachin Parashar @timesofindia.com

As President Anura Dissanayake of Sri Lanka consolidated his position with a thumping majority for his leftist coalition in Parliament, India welcomed the development while reaffirming its commitment to working with the neighbour for mutual benefit. New Delhi reiterated its invitation for the president to visit India at an early date.

With 159 seats and 61% of the votes, the coalition, National People's Power, won a landslide two-thirds majority in the 225-member Parliament. The alliance, led by Dissanayake's Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), had only

Nepal transmits power to B'desh via India grid

Nepal sent electricity to Bangladesh using an Indian grid as the three countries jointly inaugurated the first trilateral power transaction. India had signed a tripartite agreement last month with the two countries to facilitate cross-border supply. P 8

three seats in the outgoing House. Significantly, despite the Sinhala nationalism associated with JVP, the alliance even outperformed Tamil parties in the north, including in the Tamil stronghold of Jaffna.

►'Committed to ties', P 20

3 bodies found in Manipur's Barak river

The bodies of a woman and two children were found floating in the Barak river at Jirumukh in Manipur's conflict-ridden Jiribam Friday, raising fears that these could be of three of the six missing inmates of a camp for the displaced near which security forces killed 10 Hmar "militants" on Nov 11, reports Prabin Kalita. A security official said the bodies, spotted by residents of the area, were retrieved and sent to Silchar Medical College and Hospital in Assam. P 9

Mega hauls: 700kg meth, 82kg cocaine

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Delhi, Indian Navy and Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad seized 700kg of methamphetamine — worth between Rs 1,500 crore and Rs 3,000 crore — from a foreign boat in a joint operation off the Porbandar coast, officials said Friday. In another operation in Delhi, NCB seized 82.5kg of cocaine, worth around Rs 900 crore. Eight foreign nationals, who claimed to be Iranians, were arrested, NCB said. P 9

IN THE COURTS

► SC seeks details of delayed housing projects in NCR where homebuyers who took loans under subvention plan are being harassed by banks | P 7

► Delhi HC orders DDA to give compensation of over ₹11L to a woman for the death of her husband due to a balcony collapse 24 years ago | P 6

► Himachal govt moves SC to validate appt of 6 parl secys based on a 2006 state law that was quashed by HC | P 13

► Natural for two people in love to hug and kiss, it's not sexual harassment, observes Madras HC, quashes trial court proceedings against youth | P 13

10 newborns burned to death in fire at Jhansi govt hospital

Pathikrit Chakraborty & Arindam Ghosh | TNN

Lucknow/Jhansi: At least 10 newborns died as a massive fire broke out in the neonatal intensive care unit of the state-run Maharani Laxmibai Medical College Hospital, Jhansi, late Friday. Jhansi DM Avinash Kumar said prima facie, the fire was triggered by a short circuit in Nicu. Jhansi range DIG Kalandidhi Naithani said



Efforts on to evacuate children from the fire at the hospital

id there were 54 kids in the ward. Sixteen suffered minor injuries; 28 are safe. The fire that engulfed the

ward between 10.30pm and 10.45pm led to a stampede-like situation in the hospital. Six fire brigades were rushed to control the blaze. The fire had been doused, officials confirmed around 12.30am.

The safety alarms did not go off, delaying evacuation, sources said. The chief medical superintendent said there was a fire at an oxygen concentrator which spread fast.

►Report in 12 hours, P 20

J'khand women's turnout at 69% against men's 64%

JMM Says Effect Of Its Schemes, BJP Says It's Anger

New Delhi/Ranchi: Voter turnout among the women exceeded the men's by almost 4.7 percentage points in Ph-I of the Jharkhand elections, with the trend seen in all but six of 43 assembly constituencies that went to the polls Wednesday, report Bharti Jain & Dhritiman Ray.

The state witnessed an overall EVM turnout of 66.6%, 2.7 percentage points higher than the 63.9 polling recorded in the 2019 assembly polls. Female EVM turnout was a shade over 69%, even as male voters lagged behind with 64.3% participation. Third-gender voters clocked 31% turnout.

INDIA bloc claimed the female turnout showed the popularity of welfare schemes of the Hemant Soren govt, the Mayiya Samman Yojana in particular. BJP, on the other hand, said the high turnout showed women's disenchantment with the Soren govt.

►37 of 43 seats, P 20

DANCE of DEMOCRACY

► Previous Cong govt tried to undermine contributions of tribal leaders to freedom movement 'so that only one party and one family got the credit', says PM | P 9

► Amit Shah accuses Uddhav Thackeray of appeasing minorities, says 'chullu bhar paani mein doob maro (you should be greatly ashamed)' | P 11

► Rahul Gandhi accuses Modi govt, BJP of trying to 'kill' Constitution, promises caste census in Jharkhand | P 11

► PM's aircraft faces snag in Deoghar airport in Jharkhand; Rahul's copter denied clearance in Godda due to PM's event in Bihar | P 11

Birsa Munda Chowk at Sarai Kale Khan

Union home minister Amit Shah Friday renamed Delhi's Sarai Kale Khan Chowk as 'Birsa Munda Chowk' on the tribal leader's 150th birth anniversary. Shah also unveiled a 20ft statue of Birsa Munda at the entrance of Bansaera Bamboo Park. P 4

Munde, Chavan oppose 'batenge toh...' slogan

UP CM Yogi Adityanath's "batenge toh katenge" slogan is causing heartburn in BJP after raising the hackles of its Mahayuti ally NCP. Two prominent faces in BJP — MLC Pankaja Munde and RS MP Ashok Chavan — have expressed reservations about it. "My politics is different. My belief is that we should work only for development," Munde said, but later said her remark had been misconstrued. Chavan said, "This slogan has not been given by BJP, it has come from a third party." P 11

₹8.8cr recovered from 'lottery king' in ED raid

ED has recovered Rs 8.8 crore from the Chennai office of Santiago Martin, also known as 'lottery king', during searches on Thursday in a money laundering case against him and other associates for illegal gains of more than Rs 900 crore made in distribution and sale of lotteries. Martin and his Future Gaming and Hotel Services (P) Ltd are accused of committing fraud in distribution of Sikkim state lotteries. P 8

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Air Better Than 2023, But All Not Well

Nov First Fortnight Pollution Higher Than In 2022, Sees 13 'Very Poor' Days

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New Delhi: With an average air quality index of 367 in the first fortnight, the month of Nov is recording higher pollution than two years ago. Though the average AQI in the period was lower than last year, it was higher than in 2022. The Central Pollution Control Board's data shows average AQI during Nov 1-15 was 376 in 2023 and 345 in 2022.

During the first 15 days of the month this year, Delhi recorded 13 'very poor' air days and two 'severe' days, including 12 consecutive 'very poor' days when AQI surpassed 300 before 'severe' readings on Nov 13 and 14. No 'good' to 'poor' days were seen in the fortnight. In comparison, the first fortnight of Nov last year had six 'severe' days, six 'very poor' days and three 'poor' days.

Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director, research and advocacy, Centre for Science and Environment, said, "This year, Diwali was before November. Even though stubble burning increased in this period, its contribution to PM2.5 was highly variable. Once again, this elevation in pollution points at the high influence of local pollution."



We need to step up action against key sources of pollution."

TOI had earlier reported that Nov 1-15 was the most polluted stretch in the year in Delhi since it coincides with peak stubble burning, Diwali firework use and an increase in traffic intensity around festivals. At this time, meteorological conditions, including slow wind, low temperature and inversion, also adversely impact dispersion of pollutants. This year, Diwali was observed on Oct 31, while the festival was celebrated on Nov 12 last year. The average AQI during Nov 1-15 from 2018 to 2023 is 371, according to a Delhi Pollution Control Committee analysis.

Oct this year too was the most polluted in the past four years. CPCB's data shows that the city's average AQI of 231 in Oct this year was the highest since 2020, when it was 265. The figure was 219 last October, 210 in 2022 and 173 in 2021. In 2019, it was 234; 269 in 2018; 285 in 2017; 271 in 2016; and 264 in 2015.

The air quality is likely to remain in the 'very poor' category in Delhi for the next seven days, according to the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, the forecasting body under the Union ministry of earth sciences.

Elderly recounts horror of 19 days of his digital arrest

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New Delhi: The scammers had full control over my brain and body and they deceived me out of my entire savings, mortgaged a 77-year-old retired engineer, who was fleeced of over Rs 10 crore in a digital arrest scam in Rohini. He was held captive for 19 days, he claimed.

The septuagenarian told TOI that his ordeal began on Sept 25 and continued till Oct 14, during which he was accused of and threatened with legal action for money laundering. It began with the Rohini elder receiving a call from a courier company. "I usually don't take calls from unknown numbers, but unfortunately, I did that day," he said.

to a private room to avoid eavesdropping," the elder recalled. "He asked me several questions. Then, he showed me documents, including one with my Aadhaar details and another ordering me not to leave the country." The officer warned him not to disclose the incident to his children or anyone else, threatening they would also face trouble. "They put me under

From Sept 25 till Oct 14, the scammers told the elder that the investigation was going on. They asked him to transfer money and he transferred Rs 10.3 crore in three tranches.

On Oct 14, they claimed his brother's name had emerged during their probe. "They told me to tell my brother, else they would take him into custody. I went to my brother who con-



The 77-year-old retired engineer was fleeced of over Rs 10 crore in Rohini

digital house arrest for several hours," the victim recalled.

The victim is an educated, highly qualified engineer, but admits he came under pressure that day. "They claimed my phone was under surveillance," he said.

The next day, the victim was connected to a purported Enforcement Directorate officer. "He assured me of help on the matter," he said. "At that time, I was totally hypnotised, and they had full control over my brain and body."

He filed a complaint with the Rohini district police cyber cell. "I had had time to talk about the incident with my family and the cops, but I remained frightened. Even my wife was scared," he said. He said that it was too late by then and all the investment he had made had vanished. "My all money is gone," he said. The IF-SO unit of Delhi Police is investigating the matter and a breakthrough is awaited.

Green curbs take 3.8L vehicles off city roads

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New Delhi: Nearly 3.8 lakh vehicles are off Delhi's roads after the implementation of restrictions under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) Stage III on Friday on the plying of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles as well as those with lower emission standards.

These norms, formulated by the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas, kicked in on Friday after Delhi's air quality index recorded 'severe' category readings. CAQM orders the implementation of GRAP III regulations generally when AQI crosses 400.

The vehicle restriction has placed close to 1.5 lakh petrol four-wheelers under the 'not to ply' category, according to govt data until 2023.

Of these, 1.3 lakh are Bharat Stage-III compliant, 18,397 are under Euro 2 norms, and 3,752 under Euro 3 standards. In the diesel vehicle category, 2.3 lakh are off the road - 2.3 lakh under BS-IV and 1,555 under Euro 4.

Officials said the department maintains yearly data by bifurcating petrol and diesel as per emission

standards, and the actual number by now would be around 30,000 less, including both. The total number of motor vehicles on the road in the NCT of Delhi on March 31, 2023, was 79.45 lakh, as per the economic survey of 2023-2024. Of these, 20,71,115 are cars

and jeeps, 83,278 are taxis, 2,65,739 are goods vehicles, and 1,18,506 are other passenger vehicles.

Bharat Stage or BS is the emission standard all motor vehicles have to comply with if they are to be sold and driven in India. All new vehicles sold

and registered in the country should be compliant with the BS-VI emission standards. Euro or European standards are also vehicle emission standards for pollution.

The first emission norms in India were introduced in 1991 for petrol and the next year for diesel vehicles.

India 2000, the predecessor to BS II, was introduced in 2000. BS II was

These norms, formulated by CAQM, kicked in on Friday after Delhi's air quality index recorded 'severe' category readings of over 400

rolled out in 2005. In 2005 and 2006, BS III was also rolled out in NCR and several other cities in a bid to check pollution. This was almost similar to European standards (Euro III), which were in place between 2000 and 2005 in most western countries.

Anil Chhikara, faculty at the Asian Institute of Transport Development, said: "These things are fine as short-term measures, but if you need a long-term solution, then you need to fix congestion and improve public transport."



POLLUTION CAUSE AND CASUALTY

2 yrs on, project on New mayor accuses BJP of sabotaging election

bus queue shelters still at tender stage

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New Delhi: There are few takers for Delhi govt's ambitious plan to build 1,400 bus queue shelters, which was initiated two years ago. With multiple tender negotiations between the transport department and prospective bidders yielding no results, the project is now unlikely to take off before the assembly elections.

In 2022, Delhi govt envisioned constructing 1,397 modern bus shelters across the city. These shelters were also designed to feature digital displays showing real-time bus information and enhanced security measures, including CCTV surveillance and panic buttons.

A senior official of the transport department said that most of the bidders backed out because many of these bus shelters were in outer Delhi, which they did not find economically viable for earning through advertising. "We did multiple tenders but could not attract bidders. We will now tweak the conditions and float the tenders again," the official added.

Another official in the department said that there was hardly any chance for the project to be executed before the polls. He added that potential bidders were worried about

costs and financial feasibility too. "If you see the bus queue shelters of Delhi, you see heavy metals,"

He further said, "Now, we may plan to float the tenders in clusters by clubbing shelters of more than one route, but this decision can be taken only after fresh policy meetings."

Govt had earmarked Rs 75 crore in 2022 for establishing the bus queue shelters. "If all goes well, these shelters will have security features like CCTV cameras and panic buttons, among other amenities. The structures will also provide a completely barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities and elderly commuters. The shelters will have ramps, tactile paths, and handrails so that these can be easily accessed by those with reduced mobility. The shelters will also have demarcated areas for the elderly, women, and persons with disabilities," another official claimed.

The total number of buses from both DTC and cluster fleets is 7,485. The DTC fleet has 1,231 AC CNG buses, 1,878 non-AC CNG buses and 1,250 electric low-floor buses, while the cluster has 750 AC CNG buses, 1,997 non-AC CNG buses and 379 e-buses. In 2023-24, DTC recorded a daily average passenger ridership of nearly 26 lakh, while the figure for cluster buses stood at 16.4 lakh.



In 2022, Delhi govt envisioned constructing 1,397 bus shelters across the city

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: New mayor Mahesh Kumar Khinchu on Friday criticised BJP and lieutenant governor VK Saxena for sabotaging Thursday's MCD mayoral election to prevent a Dalit from taking the post.

He alleged that attempts were made to purchase councillors during the election.

At his first press conference after the election, Khinchu said the obstacles, created under 'Operation Lotus', would prove ineffective and Delhi's residents would respond appropriately in the coming assembly polls.

"I would like to highlight that

the mayoral election, which was stalled for the past seven months, was hindered by the anti-Dalit policies of BJP govt. Their motive was clear — they didn't want a Dalit to hold the mayor's position," he said, slamming BJP for indulging in horse trading and attempting to buy out councillors for votes.

Reacting to his statement, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that it was surprising that in his first press conference, the new mayor chose to make a political statement, instead of showing any vision. "Delhi is seeing extreme pollution, facing a sanitation crisis, and cases of malaria, chikungunya and

dengue are rising rapidly. MCD has a crucial role in resolving each of these problems. But surprisingly, the new mayor did not speak a word on them, and instead used the opportunity to unduly praise Arvind Kejriwal," he said.

Khinchu said that on Thursday, BJP's sole agenda was to manipulate situations in places where they otherwise fail to gain power. "The public has always given a strong response to such actions, and in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, they will once again give a resounding answer by electing AAP with a massive majority," he said.

Praising former mayor Shelly Oberoi, ex-deputy mayor Aaley Mo-

hammad Iqbal, and former leader of the House Mukesh Goyal, Khinchu said that the work carried out by them will be taken forward. "Deputy mayor Ravinder Bhardwaj and I are committed to improving Delhi's sanitation system further, making it more efficient and better managed. During the last term, under the leadership of our AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, 10,000 sanitation workers were regularised, and their salaries were ensured to be credited in the first week of every month. We will continue with these efforts," he said.

He stated that the party within MCD would fully support Delhi govt's efforts to combat pollution.

Fashion to food to music, northeast fest back with diverse flavours of eight states

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New Delhi: The 12th edition of the North East Festival is an immersive experience in the culture and flavours of the eight states and 200 communities of the north-east region of India. Whether you're a music lover, a foodie, or simply someone eager to explore different traditions, this annual event should satiate you. The event opened on Friday and will run till Sunday at Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium at India Gate.

The food zone attracted large crowds. The over 60 stalls took visitors on a culinary journey with regional specialties, such as smoked pork from Nagaland, bamboo shoot curries from Mizoram, pitas from Assam and Khosai-style pork ribs from Meghalaya. Some Delhi-based stalls creatively fused local tastes with northeastern flavours.

At a bustling Meghalaya food stall, Hima drooled over doh sni ang nei long — pork cooked with black sesame seeds. "It is very popular, and we have a chicken version of it as well," she said.

Among the cultural performers who presented traditional dances, including the Maibi dance, Pung Cholom, Kartal Cholom, Leima Jagoi, Raas Leela, Satriya and the bamboo dance, was Antara Darpang. Dressed in a mekhla and traditional jewellery, the 23-year-old performed the Assamese Bihu dance. She said, "I have come from Gu-



The 12th edition of this annual event is being held from Nov 15 to 17 at Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium in Delhi

wahati with 100 other team members and am super excited to be here."

The glamour edge — the fashion show — featured collections by 16 talented designers from the Northeast. Models walked the ramp to live music, weaving a narrative that captured the region's colours, tradition and aesthetics. But there was space also for folk arts. Yoho from Nagaland happily said, "Over the years, I have experienced how this festival helps artisans like me. My woollen handmade products resonate with the winter season in Delhi."

The excitement reached its peak when Assam's celebrated singer Zubeen Garg took the stage, delivering a performance that left the audience spellbound. The festive at-

mosphere was amplified by rock sets from Aryan Katoch, Jack of SpadeZ, Rocky Glock, Sheldawn, Ring Dangsha, Just Chorus and DJ Loki, each adding their own distinct flair to the celebration.

"I specifically came to the event for my first visit to hear Zubeen Garg," said collegian Kshitij. "I've always loved his music. I decided to linger on to hear the other artists. And the variety of food is amazing."

Organised by Socio-Cultural Trust Trend MMS, with the support of the Union ministry of development of the northeastern region, Delhi Police, and various central and state govt departments, the event aims to promote tourism, entrepreneurship and cultural awareness. Shyamkanu Mahanta, chief

organiser of the festival, said, "This platform unites diverse traditions and paves the way for opportunities that benefit the entire region." The inaugural event saw addresses by key personalities, including chief guest Pabitra Margherita, Union minister of state for textiles.

At the B2B Tourism Meet, industry leaders convened to discuss opportunities in the Northeast. Padmapani Bora, IRS, secretary of tourism, and managing director, Assam Tourism Development Corporation, said, "The state offers everything from heritage and scenic beauty to fascinating nightlife and shopping experiences. With the International Tourism Mart in Kaziranga later this month, we want to spotlight the Northeast's tourism potential."

Two arrested at IGI over fake schemes to enter Malaysia

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Two Punjab-based agents were arrested by IGI Airport for orchestrating an elaborate scheme involving fake Malaysian entry stamps and illegal border crossings, police reported on Friday.

The suspects, identified as Kanta Singh (30) and Gurpreet Kaur (32), were apprehended after their client, Sandeep Kaur, was detained during a document inspection that revealed counterfeit Malaysian immigration stamps in her passport.

The operation came to light when Sandeep Kaur, who was promised a lucrative job abroad, was fired from her position in Malaysia and attempted to return to India through Thailand. Upon her arrival at the IGI Airport, an examination of her travel documents exposed the fraudulent activity.

According to police, the agents arranged Sandeep Kaur's journey to Thailand and then facilitated her illegal entry into Malaysia via the "donkey route" — a term used for unauthorised border crossings. The agents also obtained fake Malaysian immigration stamps to create the illusion of a legitimate travel history.

"This was a well-orchestrated syndicate that duped innocent job-seekers with the promise of employment abroad," said DCP (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani.

Police had already arrested one of the key members of the syndicate, Raju, from Amritsar, Punjab. The latest arrests of Kanta Singh and Gurpreet Kaur dealt a significant blow to the operation.

Further investigation to trace other individuals involved in the scheme is underway, police said.

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Sarai Kale Khan Chowk Gets Renamed After Birsa Munda

Shah Unveils Statue Of Tribal Leader, Recalls His Courage

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Union home minister Amit Shah on Friday renamed Sarai Kale Khan Chowk as the Birsa Munda Chowk at an event celebrating the tribal leader's 150th birth anniversary in Baansera.

Shah commended Union minister of housing and urban affairs Manohar Lal Khattar for executing this change.

He also unveiled a 20-foot statue of Birsa Munda at Baansera's entrance and acknowledged the effort in restoring the 30-acre site, which now serves as a bird sanctuary.

"I was told by LG VK Saxena how this place used to be a site full of waste earlier and today the scenario has changed," he said. Shah expressed the country's enduring gratitude to Birsa Munda for his

independence movements and resistance against religious conversion.

He noted that during a period when the British controlled both India and much of the world, Birsa Munda demonstrated remarkable courage in opposing religious conversions. The day is celebrated as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas across the country, and this whole year will be celebrated as Adiva-

si Gaurav Diwas, Shah said.

LG Saxena and Union minister Khattar were present at the ceremony.

Delhi BJP president Vinendra Sachdeva said that lakhs of tribal youths from Jharkhand and Odisha reside in Delhi and contribute to the city's economy. "After Union home minister Amit Shah unveiled the statue of Lord Birsa Munda and minister Manohar Lal Khattar announced the renaming, the faces of hundreds of tribal people present there lit up with joy," he said.

Delhi govt sources said that there was no clarity on how the name will be changed, considering that the road belongs to PWD and there is no state naming authority right now. "The state naming authority falls under the urban development department under Delhi govt, and in its absence who will give permission," a Delhi govt source said.

Shah mentioned at the event that in 2015, plans were made to establish 20 museums nationwide to showcase tribal leaders and their contributions. Three of these museums are operational, with the remaining ones scheduled for completion by 2026.

Municipal Corporation of Delhi had commissioned two artisans from West Bengal to make the 3,000-kg statue of Birsa Munda using recycled materials.

MCD has also revamped the area beneath the flyover near Sarai Kale Khan ISBT on Ring Road recently, while simultaneously constructing a toilet complex facility near Baansera's entrance.

Anindya Chattopadhyay



TOUCH OF FREEDOM: A 20-foot statue of Birsa Munda has been placed at the entrance of Baansera

PWD to inspect old bridge on Barapullah drain for repairs

New Delhi: Public Works Department (PWD) will do a structural audit of an old bridge over the Barapullah drain that is near the Oberoi flyover.

Over the years, due to vehicle movement, the structure has weakened and needs repairs, officials said.

The department will carry out 3D mapping of the bridge's concrete structure to determine the damage. The mapping

technology will help engineers analyse the internal composition of the concrete structure, particularly focusing on the load-bearing pillars. This advanced technique will provide detailed imagery of the cracks, deterioration and other structural issues that may not be visible during routine inspections. "We have floated a tender for repairs of the old bridge over the Barapullah drain. It is being planned

for repair, and based on the audit report, the cost estimate and further planning will be done," a PWD official said.

The assessment will include testing the strength of the concrete, examining reinforcement conditions, and evaluating the bridge deck's integrity. Engineers will also study the impact of environmental factors such as rain and temperature variations on the structure's stability. The

Spate of acquittals leads to call for dedicated cell for MCOCA cases

STEPPING UP THE FIGHT

Dedicated MCOCA cell | Delhi Police is contemplating forming a dedicated cell to handle investigations and prosecutions under Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act

Multidisciplinary team | The cell will have not only police officers but also lawyers and chartered accountants to aid in the probe, providing a holistic approach to tackling organised crime

Why the cell? The decision was triggered by a spate of acquittals and a poor conviction rate under MCOCA, highlighting the need for specialised expertise in investigating and prosecuting these cases

Challenges in proving guilt | Establishing guilt under MCOCA requires proving not only the accused's involvement in crime but also that they have amassed wealth and built a criminal empire, which can be challenging, especially when linking benami properties to the accused

Expected impact | A dedicated cell is expected to improve the conviction rate, providing a much-needed boost to the war against organised crime in Delhi

Rajshankar Jha
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: In what could be a game changer in the war against organised crime, Delhi Police is contemplating forming a dedicated MCOCA cell to handle the investigation and prosecutions under the stringent Act. TOI has learnt that this cell will not only have police personnel, but may also comprise lawyers and chartered accountants to aid in the probe. Crime Branch is working on the nitty gritty, sources said. A spate of acquittals and a poor conviction record under the Act is said to be behind this decision.

"Establishing guilt under MCOCA is not just about people's involvement in crime, but proving that they have amassed wealth and built a criminal empire. Police must prove that the suspects are part of a syndicate and that the money they make from crime goes into building a criminal empire or is invested in property," an officer explained. "But linking benami properties to the accused and the criminal empire is not easy, especially for cops who have no specialisation in economic offences or monetary investigation and this helps the criminals during trial," he added.

A dedicated cell, senior cops agreed, would help up the ante against criminals. It would also help leash the gangsters and their henchmen. "Most importantly, it will improve the quality of investigation under the Act," an officer said.

In the last decade, Delhi Police has managed only three convictions. Last year, the killers of Soumya Vishwanathan were convicted for

stringent Act against him, leading to his acquittal under MCOCA last year. Even underworld don Babloo Srivastava and his aide Fazal-ur-Rehman were acquitted of MCOCA charges in 2012. Sex trafficker Sonu Punjaban was acquitted of MCOCA in 2014. Mafia don Mukhtar Ansari and his associates were also acquitted of the same charges in 2016. Last Aug, TOI had reported how things

In a large number of cases, MCOCA is invoked with the primary aim of depriving the accused of bail. That, however, hasn't been a deterrent with the gangsters freely operating from behind bars, said an ex-cop

uld change if a dedicated cell were formed to deal with such cases. From booking cricketer S Sreesanth in the 2013 spot-fixing case to common Sukesh Chandrasekhar, Delhi Police has been liberal in slapping MCOCA cases against many accused. Recently, they filed a second case under MCOCA against gangster Hashim Baba.

"One of the major reasons for the acquittals is that in a large number of cases, MCOCA is invoked with the primary objective of depriving the accused of bail. That, however, hasn't proved a deterrent with the gangsters freely operating from behind bars as a series of extortion calls and

other incidents in Tihar Jail show," said a retired top cop.

The complex procedure police need to follow and the need to prove linkages beyond doubt under MCOCA is another factor. Overworked and inexperienced investigating officers leave loopholes that are exploited by the defence. Several conditions need to be fulfilled to invoke MCOCA against the accused.

One of these conditions is that two chargesheets must have been filed against the accused prior to their being charged under this law. "However, this is the most misunderstood provision and leads to acquittals," a senior lawyer explained. "The condition, as held by many courts, is that two chargesheets for organised crime showing a commonality with the offence for which the accused is to be charged under MCOCA is the essential requirement." The law also stipulates that only an ACP-level officer should be the investigating officer.

MCOCA was aimed at dismantling organised crime syndicates in Maharashtra and its success led to its extension to Delhi in Jan 2002. "The first case under MCOCA was filed on May 6, 2002, against two henchmen of underworld don Abu Salem. Both were later acquitted. As per our data, MCOCA has been slapped in around 100 cases till date," an officer recalled.

Youth killed by teen over verbal abuse: A 25-year-old man was allegedly stabbed to death by a teenager after he allegedly verbally abused him in Bhalwa Dairy, police reported on Friday. The deceased has been identified as Gautam. Police have registered a case under section 103 (murder) of BNS. The cops have identified the offender as Krish(19). **TNN**

HC seeks police reply on petition to keep riot case diary unedited

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi High Court has sought the stand of police on a plea by a student activist seeking to preserve the case diary of a probe related to the communal riots that erupted in parts of the city in Feb 2020. Justice Jasmeet Singh issued notice to Delhi Police on the plea by Devangana Kalita, an accused in the case, and asked it to file its report.

Kalita's counsel alleged that police added "antedated" statements to the case diary, which is impermissible in law, and, therefore, urged the court to pass a direction to "reconstruct" and "preserve" the document.

"I can't pass an ex parte order. I need to have their response," Justice Singh said, declining any immediate relief and listing the matter for further consideration on Nov 25.

The lawyer claimed that at the stage of framing of charge in the case, which pertains to an FIR registered at the Jafraabad police station, police introduced "antedated" statements in the case diary to allege that the accused was instrumental in causing "dhakka-mukki" with police.

In her plea in the high court, Kalita assailed a trial court order which refused to call the case diary before it. Police then opposed the request on the ground that it would delay the matter further and maintained that the trial must be wrapped up swiftly.

The trial court said that at this stage, it could not look into the truthfulness and veracity of her allegations that raised a "suspicion on the version of the investigating agency" and asked her to raise the issue at an appropriate stage.

Earlier, the high court restrained the trial court from proceeding with final orders on framing charges, awaiting further arguments on claims of a larger conspiracy behind the 2020 violence. Communal clashes broke out in northeast Delhi on Feb 24, 2020, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 700 injured.

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
(N.I.T. No. 531/CE(M)/WBSTC dated-14.11.2024)
(A bridged e-Tender)
e-Tender is prescribed from in two parts viz. Technical & Financial Bids are invited for the works below:-
1. Supply of Mooring Chain & Anchor on hire basis.
Tender I.D.: 2024_WBSTD_769189_1, 2. Installation of Semi-Permanent Jetty at Lot No. 8 and Kachuberia, Tender I.D.: 2024_WBSTD_769189_3, 3. Channel Marking in between the stretch of Lot-8 & Kachuberia and Namkhana & Chemaguri, Tender I.D.: 2024_WBSTD_769189_4, 4. Supply and Installation of OR (Eight) Steel Pontoon at Namkhana, Bonubon & Chemaguri, Tender I.D.: 2024_WBSTD_769189_5, To be Published on 16.11.2024 at 09:00 A.M. Please visit website: www.wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Chief Engineer (Marine) & OSD (Managing Director), For W.B.S.T.C. Ltd.
ICA-1204713/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING e-QUOTATION
NIEQ No- WBPHED/SE/MC/NIEQ/ 01/2024-2025
Tender ID- 2024_PHEd_767359_1 to 13
e-Notice is invited by the Superintending Engineer, Murshidabad Circle, P.H.E. Dte., from reputed, bonafide & financially sound agencies having experience in similar nature of work of AIRP of different PHEDS Scheme of Murshidabad District under Berhampore Division-I, P.H.E. Dte. Last Bid proposal submission end date is on 02/12/2024 up to 02:00 P.M. For details, please visit the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Murshidabad Circle, P.H.E. Engineering Dte.
ICA-12051813/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
TENDER NOTICE
NIE7 is hereby invited by Executive Engineer, Howrah Division, P.H.E. Dte. vide Ref. No. WBPHED/EE/HO/NIE7-10 of 2024-25, Memo No. 4669/HO, Dt. 06.11.2024. Details will be available in the website www.wbtenders.gov.in and wbphed.gov.in Last date of application is 26.11.2024. Sd/- For Executive Engineer, Howrah Division, P.H.E. Dte.
ICA-12052643/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
E-Tender is invited vide NIT No. 07 of 2023-24(ES)(2nd Call) for "Site Preparation work for Up-gradation of Diagnostic infrastructure of sub centres at different blocks under Hooghly District under XV-FC for FY 2022-23" for detail information please visit the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in & www.wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- CMOH & Secretary, DH & FWS, Hooghly.
ICA-1204643/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER INVITING TENDER
e-Tender e-NIT No. WBPHWD/EEWKED/ NIT-21/2024-25, Tender ID- 2024_WBPHWD_769173_1 Name of Work: Arrangement of Airconditioning & allied Electrical installation work as well as replacement of old Electrical wiring at City Court Bar Association Rooms and Strengthening/Replacement of the existing old Electrical Rising Mains of City Civil Court Building. Electrical installation work as well as replacement of old Electrical wiring at City Court Bar Association Rooms and Strengthening/Replacement of the existing old Electrical Rising Mains; Bid Submission End Date: 06/12/2024 upto 1:00 p.m.; Website: <http://www.wbtenders.gov.in> Sd/- Executive Engineer-I, P.W.Dte., West Kolkata Electrical Division, 4th floor, C Block, New Sectt. Bldg. 3, K.S. Roy Road, Kol-01
ICA-1204881/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Abridged e-NIT
The Executive Engineer-I, Joy nagar Irrigation Division, B&W Dte. has invited tender notice against e-NIT No- WBPHWD/EE/JOY/NIT-21(e)/2024-25 on behalf of the Governor of West Bengal for 01 (One) No. Topographical Survey at Gosaba Block under his jurisdiction from the eligible outside bonafide contractors. Estimated costs put to Tender Rs. 5,61,600.00 only. *Last date of bid submission online-23.11.2024 upto 17:30 Hrs. *Technical Bid opening date-25.11.2024 after 14:00 Hrs. Other details may be available from the office of the undersigned during office hours on any working days & websites: www.wbtenders.gov.in & www.wbwd.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer-I, Joy nagar Irrigation Division, Barurip, South 24 Parganas.
ICA-12044712/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Notice of Inviting Tender
Bid ref. no. WBPHWD/EE/2024/2024, Dated-08/11/2024.
Supply & Installation of split type Air Conditioning Machine with allied E.E. work related to safety and security of all categories of staff and implementation of "RATTIERER SOUTH" at SS building DHGMCH, SAATH 24 PARGANAS. Last date of submission of bid (online)- 30.11.2024 upto 02:00 P.M. The tender document can be downloaded from www.wbtenders.gov.in or after 16.11.2024 at 12:00 P.M. Clarification request, if any may be sent to info@wbphwd.gov.in Sd/- General Manager, WBMSCL. ICA-1204653/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
TENDER NOTICE
NIE7 is hereby invited by Executive Engineer, Howrah Division, P.H.E. Dte. vide Ref. No. WBPHED/EE/HO/NIE7-10 OF 2024-25, Memo No. 4692/HO, Dt. 11/11/2024. Details will be available in the website www.wbtenders.gov.in and wbphed.gov.in Last date of application is 02/12/2024. Sd/- For Executive Engineer, Howrah Division, P.H.E. Dte.
ICA-1205253/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
TENDER NOTICE
E-Tender is invited by the Executive Engineer, Jalpaiguri Division, P.H.E. Dte. on behalf of Governor of West Bengal vide Ref. No. WBPHED/EE/JD/NIE7-15/2024-25 and ID- 2024_PHEd_768446_1 to 2024_PHEd_768446_20 for Construction of B/W, Rising main, D/S, THTC, etc. under Jalpaiguri Division, P.H.E. Dte. Last date for submission of tender is 03.12.2024 upto 16:00 Hours. The details/ addendum/ corrigendum may be obtained from website- www.wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, Jalpaiguri Division, P.H.E. Dte. ICA-1205274/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE
Tender Reference No. NIE7_18 of EE/HO/PHEd of 2024-2025, Tender ID: 2024_PHEd_768728_1. Last date for submission of Technical and Financial Bid (online): 22/11/2024 upto 3:00 P.M. Tender invited by the undersigned for Field level data validation of FHCT under Raiganj Division, P.H.E. Dte. All details available in website <http://www.wbtenders.gov.in> & www.wbphed.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, Raiganj Division, P.H.E. Dte., Govt. of West Bengal ICA-1205304/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
CORRIGENDUM NOTICE
Corrigendum-I of e-NIT_15/24-25 and ID-2024_PHEd_764452
Date Corrigendum of e-NIT is hereby published for interested bidder, last date for Submission of tender is 27.11.2024 upto 18:00 P.M. Details will be available in the Website: www.wbtenders.gov.in & wbphed.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, Central Technical Division, P.H.E. Dte. ICA-1205053/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
W.B.S.F.P.&H.D.C.L.
(A Government of West Bengal Enterprise under the control of the Department of PFI&H, Govt. of West Bengal)
Re-TENDER NOTICE
1. 48 dt. 12.11.2024 (3rd call)
2. 49 dt. 12.11.2024 (2nd call)
Re-Tenders are invited for Supply of saplings of Cybidioid Orchids bare rooted to DCCMP & Supply of HDPE Vermibed with cover to the different district of West Bengal respectively. The intending Tenderers are to apply through <http://www.wbtenders.gov.in> Details are also available in the Website: www.igsahdngal.com & www.wbphd.gov.in Sd/- Managing Director, WBSFP&HDC, Benifish Tower, Bidhannagar. ICA-1204723/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
KMDA TENDER NOTICE
e-NIT No. 12/SE/C-HR&B/KMDA/ W-38 (PFI&H) of 2024-2025. Dnt Call Online Bid are invited by the Superintending Engineer, Circle-II, R&B Sector, KMDA, 7th floor, Block-A, Umanay Bhawan, Salt Lake, Kolkata-700091, from bonafide, reliable, experienced & resourceful firms/ individuals/ contractors, joint ventures / consortium, for the work, Name of the Work, Value of the work, Earnest Money, Time of Completion, Renovation of road commencing from Lincea Hospital more to Baro of Mahab Dharu and Chaulhai B-Block more to Muslinpara Madras school via Ho Manohar baba at ward no-24 in Rajpur-Sonapur Municipal area, District South-24-parganas. Rs.67,09,673/-, Rs.14,193/-, 120days. Last date & time of Online Bid submission: 02.12.2024 time 14.30 hrs. For details contact the above office or visit both websites. (KMDA-745)
www.kmda.wb.gov.in
www.wbtenders.gov.in
ICA-1204693/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Online NIE7 is invited by the EE, BNWD, P.W.Dte., vide Tender No. WBPHWD/EE/BHW/NIE7-03e/24-25 of 2024-25, Memo No. 4692/HO, Dt. 11/11/2024. Details will be available in the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, South 24 Pgs Mechanical Division, P.H.E. Dte. ICA-1205093/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
The Executive Engineer PWD, Kolkata East Division invites e-Tender on Percentage Rate basis vide e-Tender No. WBPHWD/EE/KED/NIT-26/2024-2025 for 651st nos work vide Tender ID No. 2024_WBPHWD_769235_1 to 6 of 2024-25. Bid Submission Start date (online) is 20.11.2024 from 2:30 P.M. Bid Submission closing date (online) is 03.12.2024 upto 2:30 P.M. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of NIT and Tender documents may be downloaded from <http://www.wbtenders.gov.in> Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD, Kolkata East Division. ICA-1204973/2024

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम खण्डवा (म.प्र.) 450001
(जनकिय एवं उद्यान विभाग)
खण्डवा, दिनांक- 12/11/2024
क्रमांक 505/जनकिय/टेंडरिंग/2024
--: निविदा विक्रम :-
निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु निविदा ऑनलाईन आमंत्रित की जाती है, उत्तरेलख कार्य की निविदा का निम्नलिखित वेबसाइट <http://www.mptenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।
के ऑनलाईन पोर्टल कार्य का नाम अनुमानित लागत जी.एस.टी. सहित (लाख में) बरोहर राशि निविदा प्रपत्र की राशि कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1 2024_UAD 382034_1 शहर की विभिन्न क्षतिग्रस्त सड़कों पर डायापीकरण एवं पेवमेंट का कार्य 150.00 Lacs 1,50,000/- 5,000/- 90 दिन (जर्बालक ड्रॉकर)
निविदा ऑनलाईन क्रय एवं प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम दिनांक :- 12/12/2024 (रात 5:30 बजे तक)
निविदा खोलने की दिनांक :- 14/12/2024 (रात: 10:30 बजे)
निविदा संबंधी समस्त जानकारी वेबसाइट <http://www.mptenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकती है। निविदा में यदि किसी भी प्रकार का संशोधन किया जाता है तो वह वेबसाइट पर देखा जा सकता है।
Sd/- आयुक्त नगर पालिक निगम, खण्डवा

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
CORRIGENDUM
Executive Engineer-I, P.W.Dte., Central Kolkata Health Electrical Division, P-12, C.I.T Road (1st Floor), Kolkata-14 invites e-tender (online) for the work of (1) Please note Bid submission end date (online) is extended to 25.11.2024 up to 14:00 PM. for the following job "Triennial Day to day operation of 2 nos 15 (Fifteen) bed cum passenger lift newly installed by Kone at Dr.R.Ahmed Dental College and Hospital (New Building), Kolkata" vide e-tender No. WBPHWD/EE-I/CHEED/ENIT 70/24-25 Tender ID- 2024_WBPHWD_765571_1. Detail information/download/upload will be available from the website: <http://www.wbtenders.gov.in> & <http://www.wbphd.gov.in> Sd/- Arindam Halder Executive Engineer-I, P.W.Dte. Central Kolkata Health Electrical Division. ICA-12049112/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
EE, Kalimpong Electrical Division, PWD invites online e-Tender for the work of "Annual Preventive and Routine Maintenance of Entire Electrical Installations by engaging manpower for the site of DM Office & Bungalow, SDO Office, SDO Residence, PWD (Civil) Offices, PWD officers Residence, Treasury Buildings, District Judge Court Building, Judge Bungalow, Circuit House, PWD Peshok Bungalow, PWD Roads Mungpoo Bungalow under Kalimpong Electrical Sub-division in the district of Kalimpong (For the period from 01.12.2024 to 30.11.2025)." Tender Ref. No. WBPHWD/EE/KED/NIT-04 of 2024-25, Tender ID-2024_WBPHWD_769262_1 Bid submission Opening date (online): 13-11-2024, 06:55 P.M. Closing date (online): 26-11-2024, 05:45 P.M. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of N.I.Q and Tender document may be downloaded from: <http://www.wbtenders.gov.in> Sd/- EE, Kalimpong Electrical Division, P.W.Dte. ICA-1204982/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
Superintending Engineer, Eastern Circle, PWD, invites online e-tender for the work of "Restoration for proposed laying of pipe along the existing road for integrated surface water based piped water supply for Arsenic affected blocks of Baduria, Basirhat-I, Sirsihat, Degana & Swanagar Blocks from Chaining 1.90 Kmp to 12.00 Kmp along Right side and 17.10 Kmp to 17.70 Km along the left side of Sayastanagar-Kajuri-Chituri Road under Barasat, Arsenic Division, P.H.E. Dte. under Barasat Division, PWD, the district of North-24 Parganas. Estimated Amount Rs. : 3,59,12,705.00 NIE7 No. WBPHWD/SE/EC/NIE7- 08/2024-2025 Tender ID: 2024_WBPHWD_769217_1 Bid Submission upload start date: 20.11.2024 from 15:00 Hours Bid Submission upload end date : 12.12.2024 up to 15:00 Hours. The details of NIE7 and Tender document may be downloaded from <http://www.wbtenders.gov.in> Sd/- SE EC, PWDGOVT OF WB ICA-1204853/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
WRIKADD. e-NIT
Executive Engineer (A-M) Suri (A-M) Division, WRIDD invites e-tender for Construction of New Major Electric R/LJ under Sanasari Mukhobanasi (Core Sector) Programme vide e-NIT No. 07/2024-25, Tender ID- 2024_WRDD_769546_1 and vide e-NIT No. 08/2024-25, Tender ID- 2024_WRDD_769614_1. Last dropping date 03/12/2024 upto 6:00 P.M. Intending bidders are requested to visit the website <http://www.wbtenders.gov.in> for details.
Sd/- Executive Engineer (A-M) Suri (A-M) Division. ICA-1204783/2024

Nuh Residents Whose Homes, Shops Razed After Riots Still Recovering From Blow

As part of its Phase 4 expansion, DMRC is constructing 86 kilometres of new lines across five corridors.

While three corridors — Janakpuri West-RK Ashram Marg, Majlis Park-Maujpur, and Aerocity-Tughlakabad — are under construction, the other two new corridors, Lajpat Nagar-Saket-G Block and Indraprastha- Inderlok, are in the pre-tendering stages.

DISPELLING THE DARKNESS

Rajesh Mehta



Devotees light candles at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib on the 555th Parkash Purab of Guru Nanak Dev

Man murdered by neighbour

New Delhi: A 42-year-old man was murdered after he objected to the abusive behaviour of his neighbour in the Bhalswa Dairy area on Wednesday. Police have arrested the accused.

The accused, identified as Dheera, first attacked the man with an iron rod on the head and then pushed him, causing the neighbour to fall down the stairs.

Police received a PCR call on Wednesday. The caller informed them that a neighbour attacked his uncle on the head with a stick and pushed him from the stairs, resulting in his death. Upon reaching the spot, the police identified the deceased as Ran Singh. The victim's family told the police that the accused, Dheera, used to abuse and beat his wife. The police registered a murder case against the accused and arrested him after conducting raids at his possible hideouts. **TNN**

Help for homebuyers: SC seeks details of delayed projects in NCR

AmitAnand.Choudhary
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Supreme Court has sought details of delayed housing projects in NCR where homebuyers, who took loans under subvention plan to fund their dream homes, are being harassed by financial institutions because of developers not completing the project and also for not paying EMI to banks as per the agreement.

Under the subvention scheme, banks disburse the sanctioned amount directly to the accounts of the builders, who were then to pay EMIs on the sanctioned loan amount, until possession of the flats are handed over to the homebuyers. As builders started defaulting in paying the EMIs to the banks as per the Tripartite Agreement, the banks initiated action against the buyers to recover the EMIs instead.

As hundreds of homebuyers approached the court against banks for taking coercive action against them for default of builders in paying EMIs, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan decided to take a comprehensive look at the problem to explore ways to

resolve the issue. The bench sought all details regarding payment made by builders and buyers to the banks, status of the project and the proceedings going on against default builders in different forums including under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

The bench directed petitioner homebuyers, builders and banks to furnish these information regarding different projects—(i) The status and details of payments made by builders to banks or payments by the homebuyers to banks/ builders, (ii) The date of offering possession where the project is stated to have been completed, (iii) The current status of completion of the project (iv) The status of recovery from the homebuyers, (v) The amenities advertised by the builders at the time of launching projects and the status re: completion thereof, (vi) The status as to whether the builder-cum developers has undergone CIRP (under IBC) or any other coercive or non-coercive recovery procedure, and the stage of such proceedings, (vii) Whether the homebuyers received any relief from the statutory authorities like Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RE-

RA). If so, the details of such orders be also furnished.

The bench had earlier granted relief to the homebuyers and directed that no coercive action be taken against them by banks or builders regarding payment of EMI and no complaint should be entertained against them for cheque bounce cases. A large number of homebuyers had approached Delhi High Court which had in 2023 refused to grant them relief, saying that there were alternate remedies available to them and they thereafter knocked the doors of the apex court. One batch of the homebuyers, represented by advocate Anshul Gupta, submitted that they were victims of illegal disbursement of loan by the bank directly into the account of the builder in violation of RBI guidelines, which

are statutory in nature.

"This is the classic case where one rich man (bank/financial institutions) gave money to another rich man (builder). The rich man who received the money (builder) ran away with it without fulfilling his obligations. The rich man who gave the money (bank/financial institutions), disbursed it in violation of the law of the land. The poor man (homebuyer) is now made a victim and is pushed into litigation by the bank when he has not received a single rupee. And is deprived of his dream home," a petition, filed by advocate Gupta, said. They alleged the main violation was that the banks disbursed the amount directly to the builder without linking it to the stages of construction in gross violation of RBI circulars as well as National Housing Bank guidelines.



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गीडा द्वारा दिनांक 26.10.2024 को औद्योगिक मूल्यकों के आवंटन हेतु प्रकाशित विज्ञापन में, "ऑन-लाइन" आवेदन प्राप्त करने की अन्तिम तिथि 17.11.2024 निर्धारित थी, जिसे आगे बढ़ाकर दिनांक 19.11.2024 किया जाता है।
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Visualisation of historical events

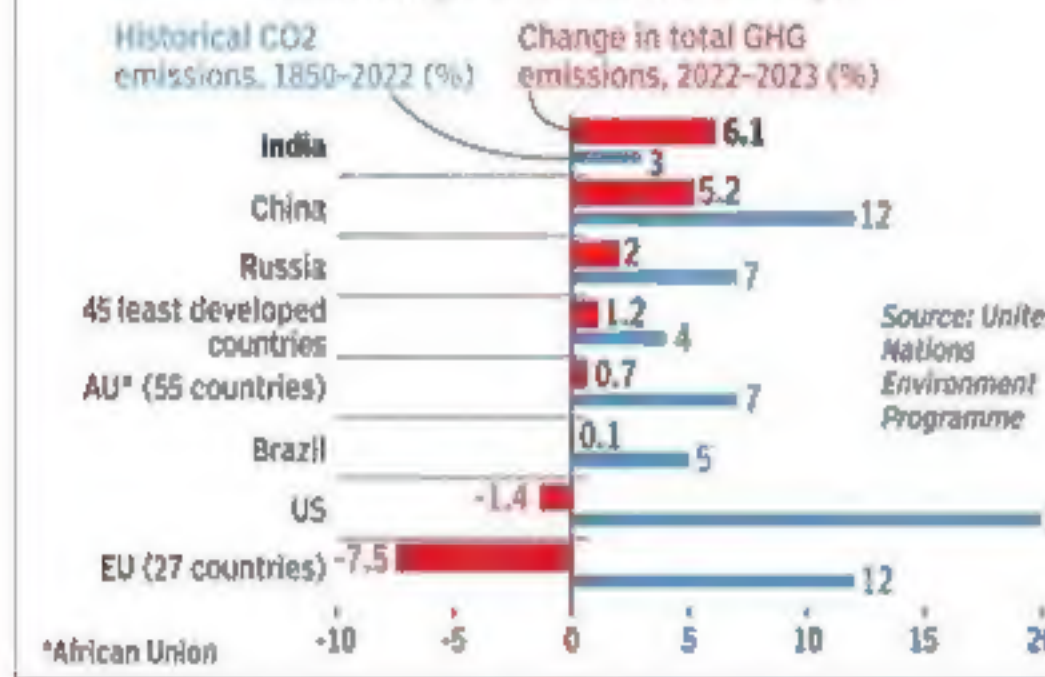
Benazir Bhutto became Pakistan's PM on this day in 1988, the first woman to lead a Muslim state in modern times

Tigress hit by train, critically injured
An adult tigress, presumably from Nakadongri forest range in Maharashtra's Bhandara district, was critically injured after it was hit by a train near Dongri railway station Friday, reports Vijay Pinjarkar. The tigress sustained critical injuries to its head, hind legs, and its tail got severed. The animal made attempts to move but due to internal and external injuries, collapsed on the tracks.

The tigress was rescued after seven hours by the forest department. One of the reasons for the delay was people taking selfies with the injured animal. Deputy conservator of forests Rahul Gavai said, "Our staff reached the spot but could not launch rescue operation for want of a rapid rescue team, vehicles, equipment, and veterinarians." Veterinarian Dr Vitthal Hatwar said, "We had to procure reversal drug externally, hence the delay."

CLEAN PAST, 'DIRTY' FUTURE VS 'DIRTY' PAST, CLEAN FUTURE

Historically, India's share in global emissions has been minuscule. But it recorded the sharpest rise in greenhouse gas emissions in 2023 over the previous year. There are countries that have a contrasting record on climate change



Nepal's power starts flowing to B'desh through Indian grid

Tripartite Agreement A Major Boost For Regional Energy Connectivity

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India joined Nepal and Bangladesh in inaugurating the first trilateral power transaction — from Nepal to Bangladesh through the Indian grid — in a major boost for energy connectivity in the region. With both Nepal and Bangladesh keen on long-term electricity trade, India had signed a tripartite agreement last month with the two countries to facilitate cross-border supply using an Indian transmission line.

Describing the inauguration as a historic occasion, the Indian govt said the start of this power flow is expected to boost sub-regional connectivity in the power sector.

India had announced its decision to facilitate the trilateral power transaction through the Indian grid, with an export of up to 40 MW of power during the visit of former Nepal PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to India in June 2023. "During the visit, both sides had expressed their commitment towards greater sub-regional cooperation, including in the energy sector, which would lead to increased interlinkages between the economies for mutual benefit of all stakeholders," said the MEA.

Union minister for power



The supply is particularly important for Bangladesh as it grapples with continued power shortages. The agreement was inked last month

Manohar Lal inaugurated the electricity flow along with Bangladesh energy adviser Fouzul Kabir Khan and Nepal energy minister Dipak Khadka through a virtual event hosted by Nepal govt. "This historic occasion marks the first trilateral power transaction which has been carried out through the Indian grid," govt said. The agreement between NTPC Vidyut

Vyapar Nigam, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and Bangladesh Power Development Board was signed last month in Kathmandu. The agreement had been delayed by a couple of months due to the political crisis in Bangladesh. The supply facilitated by India is particularly important for Bangladesh as it grapples with continued power shortages. "This green energy initiative promises industrial growth and regional prosperity," said Khadka.

NEA plans to sell electricity to Bangladesh annually during the rainy season, from June 15 to Nov 15. In the beginning, Nepal will export 40 MW of electricity generated in the country to Bangladesh via India. The expected export is 1,44,000 megawatt-hours and NEA estimates earnings of \$9.2 million over the five months, Nepal media reported.

ED finds ₹8.8cr at Chennai office of lottery king Santiago Martin

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: ED has recovered Rs 8.8 crore from the Chennai office of Santiago Martin, better known as the lottery king, during searches on Thursday in a money laundering case against him and other associates for illegal gains of more than Rs 900 crore made in distribution and sale of lotteries.

The searches were carried out at more than 20 premises of the accused and his family members in Chennai and Coimbatore and at other associates in Faridabad, Ludhiana and Kolkata



ED on Thursday searched over 20 premises of the accused, his family members and other aides in a money laundering case

to look into the 'proceeds of crime' generated from illegal distribution and sale of lotteries in several states. Martin and his future

Gaming and Hotel Services (P) Ltd are accused of committing fraud in distribution of Sikkim state lotteries. ED had earlier carried out searches on Martin and associates in May last year when it had seized assets worth over Rs 457 crore, including Rs 158 crore in fixed deposits and mutual funds, and Rs 299 crore worth of properties.

The probe against Martin, who is India's biggest political donor having contributed Rs 1,368 crore through electoral bonds to all parties including DMK, comes weeks after Madras high court validated ED's case under the PMLA.

After protest, UP reschedules PCS exam to Dec 22

Prayagraj: Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) has rescheduled this year's PCS (preliminary) exam to Dec 22 following protests by aspirants, reports Kapil Dixit. It was earlier scheduled for Dec 7 and 8.

The exam will now be held in two shifts — from 9.30am to 11.30am and 2.30pm to 4.30pm. The change aims to ease travel and scheduling issues for candidates and enable them to complete the exam in one day.

Aspirants protesting against UPPSC since Monday have called off their stir. The exam was rescheduled following CM Adityanath's intervention.

Over 1,700 lobbyists for fossil fuels given access to COP29



Activists protest with an effigy of a snake against participation of fossil fuel lobbyists at the UN COP29 climate summit in Baku Friday

Baku: Over 1,700 fossil fuel — oil, gas and coal — "lobbyists" have been granted access to COP29, and their number is more than almost every country-delegation at the UN climate conference here, according to an analysis released on Friday. Data showed that lobbyists with 1,773 registered participants are only outnumbered by delegations of host Azerbaijan (2,229), COP30 host Brazil (1,914), and Türkiye (1,862).

The list of lobbyists includes 24 from India as well. Among Indians, most (17)



Vishwa Mohan

came as a delegation from Fieci, three from CII and four representing different NGOs.

The list of Indians includes Pravin Dongre, executive director of Indian Oil Corporation. The list, accessed by TOI, mentioned him as nominated by NGO Griha Council as its guest.

Dongre told TOI he was here to promote global biofuel alliance. He, however, didn't have a clear answer as to why he was here as an NGO's guest.

The analysis of participants was done by the Kick Big

Polluters Out (KBPO), which is a coalition of more than 450 global organisations united in demanding an end to the ability of big polluters to write the rules of climate action. "The lobby's grip on climate negotiations is like a venomous snake coiling around the very future of our planet. We must expose their deceit and take decisive action to remove their influence and make them pay for their inaction towards our planet. It's time to prioritise voices of those who have been fighting for justice and sustainability, not the interests of polluters," said KBPO member Nnimmo Bassey.

A vast number of lobbyists were granted access to COP as part of a trade association. India's Fieci with 17 members is at number three after International Emissions Trading Association (43) and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (27) in the list of top 10 biggest trade associations in attendance, representing the fossil fuel industry. Eight of the top 10 groups with the most lobbyists came from Global North.

Last year's analysis showed that an historic high of over 2,450 lobbyists were granted access to COP28 in Dubai, up from 636 the year before that in Egypt.

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Birsa Munda denied due in bid to glorify Nehru, descendants: Modi

Shah: Was First To Champion Tribals' Rights

Madan.Kumar@timesofindia.com

Patna/New Delhi: Modi gov't effort to canonise Birsa Munda, who valiantly stood up to British might, as a national icon has gathered momentum, with PM Modi regretting the failure to acknowledge the heroic fight the legendary tribal warrior put up against the colonial rulers. "As we celebrate Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, it is important to understand why this event is necessary. It is an honest effort to correct a great injustice in history. The contribution of the tribal community was not given the recognition in history it deserved after independence," the PM said while addressing a function in Bihar's Jamui which is close to the border of the Santhal Pargana region of Jharkhand to which Birsa Munda belonged.



PM Narendra Modi and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar in Jamui. The PM launched projects worth over Rs 6,000cr during Janjatiya Gaurav Divas on Friday

Modi govt has decided to celebrate 150th birth anniversary of the tribal hero as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas and PM marked the day by inaugurating and laying foundation of projects worth Rs 6,000 crore. The day also saw home minister Amit Shah unveiling a statue of Birsa Munda at the intersection at Sarai Kale Khan ISBT in Delhi which has been named after the leader of 'Ulgulan', the great tumult, that challenged the British. Modi blamed neglect of Munda and other tribal leaders who were part of the anti-colonial struggle to the effort

to glorify the first PM Jawahar Lal Nehru and his descendants to exclusion of others. "The effort was that members of one party and one family got credit," Modi said, without mentioning any names. "The tribal community is the one that led centuries-long fight to protect Bharat's culture and freedom. However, following Independence, attempts were made to erase this contribution from tribal history, driven by selfish politics to give credit to Bharat's freedom solely to one party. But if only one family secured Independence, then why did

the 'Ulgulan' movement led by Birsa Munda happen? What was Santhal Rebellion? What was Kol Rebellion?" he asked. The speech reflected BJP's concern to integrate tribals into larger nationalist stream as a counter to attempts to cast them as a separate entity whose interests were at odds with majority community. In Delhi, Shah spoke along the same lines after unveiling Birsa Munda's statue. "At a very young age, he raised his voice against religious conversion," Shah said of Birsa Munda who died at the young age of 25. "When the whole of India and two-thirds of the world was ruled by British, Birsa Munda displayed the courage of standing firmly against religious conversion and later this determination and bravery transformed him into a leader of this country," the home minister added. Shah added that Munda was the first one to champion the primacy of tribals' claims on resources — jal, jungle, jameen (water, forests, land) — in their traditional lands.

700 kg of meth worth ₹3,000cr seized from boat off Gujarat coast

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad/New Delhi: Narcotics Control Bureau, Delhi, Indian Navy and Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) seized 700 kg of methamphetamine — worth between Rs 1,500 crore and Rs 3,000 crore — from a foreign boat in a joint operation off the Porbandar coast, officials said on Friday. Separately, NCB seized 82.5 kg of cocaine, worth around Rs 900 crore, in Delhi. "The back-to-back major breakthroughs against illegal drugs in a single day demonstrate the Modi govt's unwavering resolve to build a drug-free Bharat," Union home minister Amit Shah posted on X. He added that the New Delhi consignment of cocaine was tracked using a "bottom-to-top approach" and that the fight against drugs would "continue ruthlessly". "A huge consignment of about 700 kg of methamphetamine was interdicted in Indian territorial waters. During this operation eight foreign nationals, who claimed to be Iranians, were arrested," NCB said. The eight men had no identity documents, NCB said. According to NCB officials, there is no standard method to calculate the value of drugs as it varies as per volume, quality, region, as well as demand and supply. However, according to rough estimates, international street prices of meth, a synthetic recreational variety of narcotics, could be anywhere between Rs 2 crore and Rs 5 crore per kg. Accordingly, the price of the seized meth could be estimated to be anywhere between Rs 1,500 crore and Rs 3,500 crore. NCB said an operation codenamed "Sagar Manthan-4", based on intelligence inputs, was launched to intercept an unregistered vessel — without an automatic identification system or an electronic boat or ship-tracking indicator — that entered Indian waters with drugs. The suspect vessel was identified and interdicted by Navy and the seizure of the drugs and arrests took place Friday, it added. Investigations are underway to uncover the origin of the drug shipment, intended recipients, and the broader network

Bodies of woman, 2 kids found in Manipur river

Prabin.Kalita@timesofindia.com

Guwahati: Bodies of a woman and two children were found floating in the Barak river at Jirimbukh in Manipur's conflict-ridden Jiribam Friday, raising fears that these could be of three of the six missing inmates of a camp for the displaced near which security forces killed 10 Hmar "militants" on Nov 11.

A security official said the bodies, spotted by residents of the area, were retrieved and sent to Silchar Medical College and Hospital in neighbouring south Assam for autopsy and identification.

"We cannot confirm if the three bodies are of those among the three women and as many children reported missing for five days. We have to wait for the autopsy findings," the official said.

Those reported missing are a 25-year-old woman and her eight-month-old daughter and two-year-old son, a 31-year-old woman and her eight-year-old daughter, and a 60-year-old woman.

Manipur Police said two senior officers were stationed in Jiribam and Borobekra to

Protests intensify over killing of 10 'militants'

Guwahati: The backlash against Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Manipur Police over the Nov 11 Jiribam gunfight in which 10 "armed militants" died spilled over to Churachandpur on Friday — marked by street protests, petitions to Union home minister Amit Shah and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and a campaign for a judicial inquiry.

Hundreds joined Kuki Women Organisation for Human Rights in a demonstration at Koite ground in the district HQ from 11am, raising slogans against CRPF and holding placards demanding justice for the families of the slain men, reports Prabin Kalita.

Kuki-Zo civil groups say the deceased were tribal "volunteers" safeguarding villages and civilians from attacks by valley-based intruders, some of whom allegedly raped and inflicted "third-degree" torture on a 31-year-old mother of three before burning her to death at Zairawn in Jiribam on Nov 7. Kuki Students' Organisation vice president Minlal Gangte urged the gathering to commit themselves to the quest for justice in front of the "Wall of Remembrance", a memorial to people from the tribal community who died in the ethnic violence since May 2023. Memorandums addressed to NHRC and home minister Shah were handed to the additional deputy commissioner Seinmthang Lenthang.

supervise and coordinate operations by multiple teams to trace the six missing people.

Amid all this, Inspector Sagapam Ibomboti Singh, officer-in-charge of Jiribam police station, submitted his resignation to the DGP, citing "unavoidable circumstances of my family and other reasons". He was transferred out immediately, sources said. Singh, a recipient of the

President's a Medal for Gallantry on two occasions, was leading the police team that joined CRPF in the counteroffensive following an attack on two posts of the paramilitary force. The Kuki-Zo community insists that the 10 "militants" killed in retaliatory gunfire were Hmar "volunteers" safeguarding their villages from attacks by intruders.

Kharge's reply to BJP's attack on Art 370 backfires, draws angry reaction from NC

Saleem.Pandit@timesofindia.com

Srinagar: AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge's potshots at BJP brass for "raking up" Article 370 backfired Friday on his party's alliance with National Conference in J&K, with Srinagar MP Aga Ruhullah Mehdi saying "no INC president or JKPCC president has a right to misinterpret the resolution" passed by the assembly to restore the region's special status. "This resolution calls for the return of all the guarantees in their original shape and form, as operational before 1953, including Art 370 and 35A. Let alone JKPCC or any other entity, even if anyone from within @JKNC tries to misinterpret the resolution... (they) will be rejected and pushed by the people to a corner of irrelevance, as the allies of BJP were in the last election," Mehdi wrote on X.



The NC MP's outburst at Kharge's remarks about BJP "keeping alive the issue of Article 370" coincided with J&K PCC chief Tariq Hameed Karra telling reporters in Srinagar that the Nov 6 assembly resolution doesn't even mention the abrogated constitutional provision, let alone seek its reinstatement. "(Home minister) Shah, in poll rallies, accuses Congress

Mehdi said the purpose of new J&K assembly's resolution was to express people's disapproval of all amendments and allegedly unconstitutional abrogation of the "guaranteed (special) status of J&K" from 1953 till 2019. Democratic Progressive Azad Party's Salman Nizami said jousting between Congress and BJP over Article 370 had exposed the fault lines in the grand old party's alliance with NC. "Both Congress and BJP call Article 370 a closed chapter, yet your party is in alliance with Congress and gifts shawls to BJP to keep both in good humour," he said, addressing Mehdi. State Congress chief Tariq Hameed Karra clarified his party, which decided not to join the coalition govt till J&K's statehood was restored, said there should be no ambiguity about the purpose of the assembly resolution.

Mutton mayhem: BJP MP's feast turns chaotic over missing meat

Rajeev.Dikshit @timesofindia.com

Varanasi: A feast hosted by BJP's Bhadohi MP Vinod Kumar Bind at his office in Mirzapur's Karsada turned into a battleground as guests who were allegedly served mutton gravy without any meat pieces created a ruckus.

They even slapped the youth serving the mutton, leading to an unruly scene that lasted several minutes, until senior BJP members and locals intervened.

A video clip of people leaving the feast venue with food packets and the injured youth heading towards his motorcycle was widely circulated on social media.

According to reports, a youth had joined the "pangat (guests sitting and dining on the ground in a row)". He



grew suspicious after he was served too much gravy in his bowl. He dipped a finger into his bowl and couldn't find a single mutton piece.

As tempers flew, he asked the person serving the food about it and, on not receiving a satisfactory response, hurled abuse at him and slapped him. This led to a clash between the youth's companions and the caterer, forcing other guests to leave the feast.

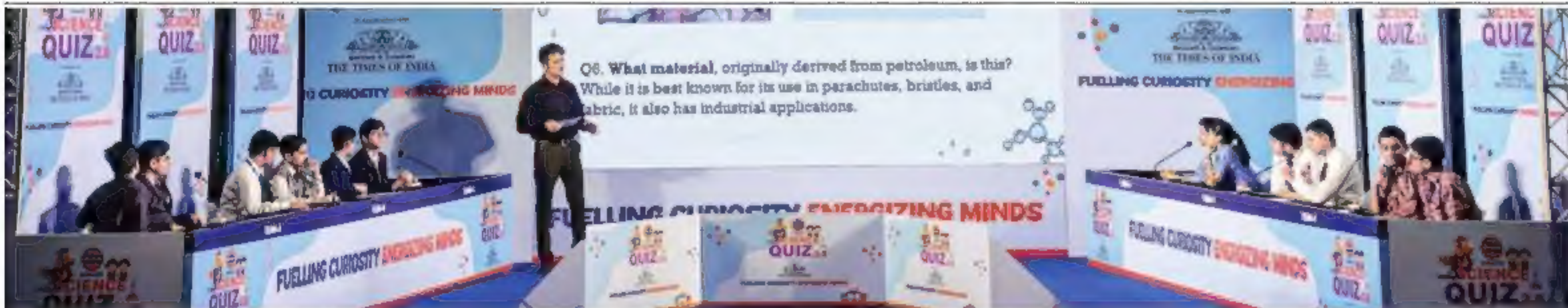
Later, when reporters contacted the MP at a public meeting of UP CM Yogi Adityanath in the district's Majhawan area on Friday to enquire about the party being held despite the model code of conduct being in place, Bind refused to comment. Umashankar Bind, who looks after the MP's office, said, "As maximum invitees had consumed food, preparations were being made to wind up the feast after 8.30pm. In the meantime, some youths who had been consuming liquor at a country liquor shop entered the venue, which was restricted to limited invitees." The same youth caused disturbance and fled the scene, he added. According to him, the whereabouts of those youths could not be ascertained from people present at the office.

Science Quiz 2.0

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

Brilliance on display with young students in a knowledge face-off

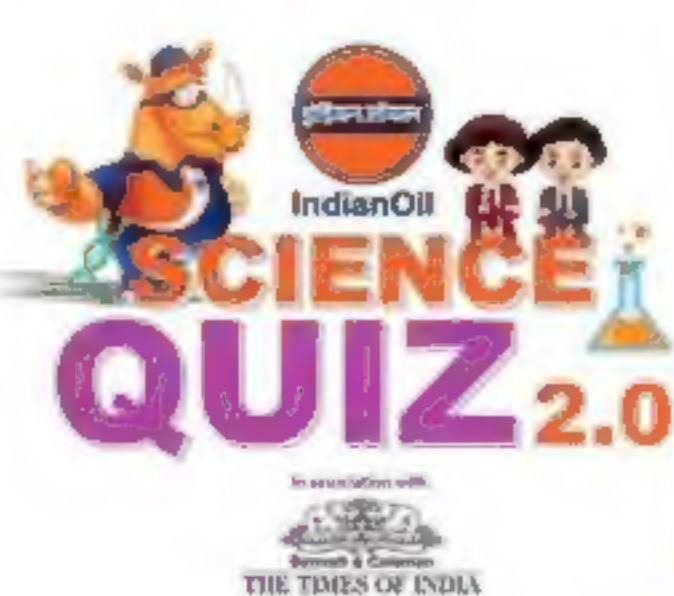
With students from 150 schools, this year's IndianOil Science Quiz 2.0 in association with The Times of India challenged young minds on a range of scientific topics



Response.Mumbai @timesofindia.com

Science embodies a thirst for knowledge and curiosity that seeks to answer some of the greatest questions in our environment. As a subject, it sparks curiosity in learners as young as four or five. From the wonders of plants and animals to why a slice of buttered toast often lands butter-side down, or how mobile screens can now curve, bend, open out, or fold inwards—the very fabric of everything around us, visible and invisible—science is all this and more. It invites us to explore, teases us to peek, and then draws us down a rabbit hole into a wonderland of discovery. While some of us may later choose careers in languages, arts, business, finance or countless other fields, the enduring legacy of science stays with us, no matter what we go on to do in life. If we view the world in the spirit of a wide-eyed explorer—discovering, analysing, inferring—science instils in us a way of seeing life, addressing problems and approaching situations with a scientific temperament that shapes how we navigate the world, conduct research, and find solutions. The IndianOil Science Quiz, first

conducted in 2023-24 in association with The Times of India, was conceptualised to inspire a scientific appetite among school children in classes seven, eight and nine, encouraging them to develop a scientific mindset and make informed choices about their academic futures. After the great success of its first year and in response to demand from students across India, the series expanded to eight quizzes.



The IndianOil Science Quiz 2.0 kicked off in style in New Delhi on 11 November 2024, with over 150 registered schools from Delhi-NCR, including teams from Agra, Vrindavan, and Sonapat. The quiz was conducted at the Pearey Lal Bhawan-Gandhi Memorial Hall at ITO.

After a highly competitive preliminary written round with narrow margins among the top eight teams, the following six teams made it to the stage final:

1. Air Force Bal Bharti School
2. Amity International School, Pushp Vihar
3. Blue Bells Model School
4. Maxfort School, Paschim Vihar

5. Sarla Chopra DAV Public School, Noida
6. Tagore International School, Vasant Vihar

These schools battled it out for the title of city champions. The Architect of Questions Kunal

Savarkar quizzed the participants on a host of topics, ranging from the usual suspects of physics, chemistry and biology to geology, environment, safety, sustainability, technology and astronomy, all viewed through the lens of scientific enquiry.



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CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

Jadav Kakoti
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The attraction of ultra-luxury homes has always been there among the homebuyers. Of late, there has been a significant rise in demand for such ultra-luxury homes in the entire NCR. Commenting on the trend, Shalin Raina, managing director (residential services) of a real estate consultant firm, elaborates, "Over the past year, a significant rise in demand for high-end and luxury properties has emerged at both national and local levels. This shift reflects a change in homebuyers' growing desire to invest in a place not only to live but as a high-quality asset that reflects their lifestyle aspirations. Furthermore, the demand for larger, more luxurious homes has attracted established developers with the capital and expertise to deliver premium, customized living spaces that cater to the aspirations of modern India. This trend has led to a surge in launches by established developers, significantly increasing their year-on-year contribution to the residential market. We expect this momentum to continue throughout the coming fiscal year (FY 2024-25) as well."

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

BK Malagi, COO of a real estate firm, says, "The market for luxury real estate is always changing to satisfy consumers' demands for a more upscale lifestyle. There is evidence of a rise in the next generation's desire for opulent residences. Urbanisation, exposure to global living standards, and greater income levels

are the causes of this. This generation is more likely to choose opulent home designs with the latest amenities, unique experiences, safety, and well-being. These modern buyers are spending a lot of money to buy the residences of their dreams." He further adds, "A shift has occurred in the dynamic geography of work culture, bringing in an era of remote work and adaptable ways of living. As a result, discriminating purchasers favour opulent residences that radiate elegance while also providing the usefulness of assigned offices and roomy living spaces that promote both work



PICS: ISTOCK

LUXURY ABODES catch buyers' fancy

The demand for bigger and more spacious homes has seen a significant rise during the last couple of years in NCR

and leisure."

NCR's opulent mansions entice buyers with promises of enjoyment and leisure. Every aspect of these homes, from lavish interiors that evoke a feeling of majesty to expansive gardens that provide a quiet haven, is painstakingly designed to satisfy the discriminating tastes of the elite.

Prestigious NCR locales with luxurious residences are especially in demand. This is so because they provide seclusion, exclusivity, and easy access to important monuments. Many purchasers consider luxury properties as long-term invest-

ments in the NCR, expecting property values to increase over time.

Developers also echo similar views. Amit Modi, director of another realty company, says that most of the new launches in the luxury segment take place

150 and Sector 107 are some of the major sought-after destinations.

Similarly, Ankush Kaul, chief business officer of a real estate firm, says, "In the past three years, the luxury real estate sector in the NCR has experienced expo-

prestige but also attractive investment instruments. Nayan Raheja, a leading developer, says, "Gurgaon, especially areas like Dwarka Expressway, Southern Peripheral Road, and New Gurgaon have emerged as a sought-after destina-

homes both for end-use and investment purposes. NRIs have also emerged as significant players and are investing in the market."

G Venkat Naveen Gadde, founder and managing director of a realty firm, says, "There are multiple

apartments. The rapidly growing economy has had a positive impact on the income of people. The burgeoning middle class holds stronger aspirations and higher purchasing power. The economically stronger middle class is looking for quality, facilities and aesthetics while choosing homes. The last few years have also witnessed a greater interest from high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) and NRIs in Indian residential spaces. Furthermore,

The burgeoning middle class holds stronger aspirations and higher purchasing power. This economically stronger section is looking for quality, facilities and aesthetics while choosing homes

luxurious residential properties offer greater attraction to residents, especially the next generation who want to lead a facility-rich, upmarket lifestyle. Location, better connectivity, and associated infrastructure are also significant

contributors to the increasing popularity of luxury homes."

SIZE MATTERS

Gadde further adds, "There has been a growing preference for spacious homes, which has led to an increase in the average flat sizes across the country. As per industry reports, flat sizes have increased by 11 per cent across India. In fact, bettering the metros, Hyderabad has recorded the highest average flat size of 2300 sq ft in 2023. While the development of new areas has given developers an opportunity to seek premium rates for

more spacious properties, homebuyers come across as strongly motivated to buy homes that are larger. The growing aspirations and better purchasing power are the key motivating factors."

Homebuyers now also have a stronger trust in the government's pace of development, and even if the properties are distantly located from the commercial/business centres, they trust the infrastructure and development to happen sooner than later, appreciating the value of their assets and offering them seamless connectivity.



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in Noida and Greater Noida and the region leads the trend in NCR. At the same time, NCR is also a front-runner in the country in terms of premium and luxury properties. He adds that Noida Expressway and Noida Sector

mental growth, supported by increased infrastructure spending and innovative partnerships. New metro projects, widening of the internal roads and better sectoral connectivity have further fuelled the demand. At the same time, there is also a growing desire to have iconic addresses as their homes and people are willing to spend money to lead a quality lifestyle."

Moreover, investments from non-resident Indians (NRIs) have further fuelled this growth, making luxury homes not just symbols of

tion for luxury housing. There is no dearth of supply either, and leading developers are offering premium and luxury homes with high-end facilities catering to the niche demand. Much of it has happened in the last three years, which saw heightened demand for large

factors contributing to the growing popularity of luxury homes amongst buyers. The pandemic at the start of the decade has significantly changed the trend for more spacious accommodations with multiple rooms. So, one can observe an increasing preference for 3 to 5-BHK

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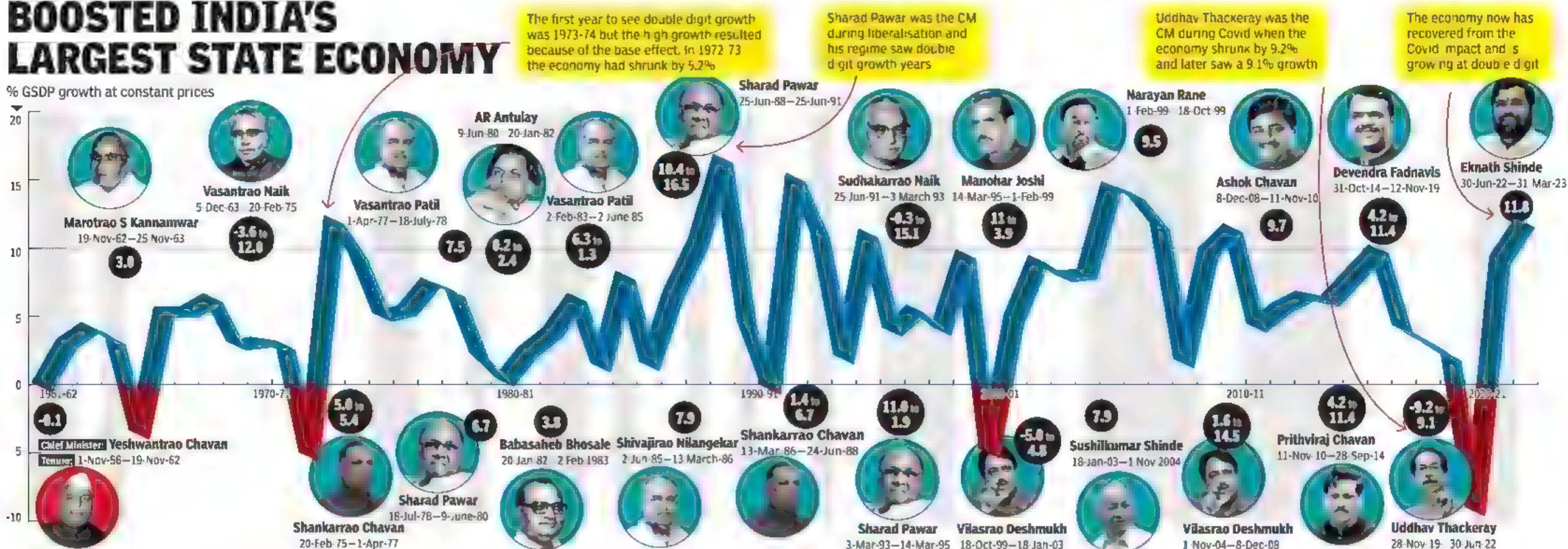
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HOW LIBERALISATION BOOSTED INDIA'S LARGEST STATE ECONOMY

Maharashtra's economic development could be broadly divided into two phases. The first phase was pre-liberalisation which saw a relatively lower growth rate. Being more industrialised as compared to many other states it benefitted from the opening of the economy as post liberalisation period saw many years of double digit growth



Uddhav should be ashamed of appeasement politics: Shah

Also Attacks Cong 'Plan For Muslim Quotas'

Abhishek Choudhary, Bhaskar Mehare & Mazhar Ali TNN

Nagpur/Yavatmal/Chandrapur: Raising the decibels in the last-lap campaign blitz in Maharashtra, Union home minister Amit Shah questioned Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on his Hindutva credentials on Friday, saying he should be "terribly ashamed" of his "minority appeasement" politics.



Shah was speaking at a public rally at Umarkhed in Yavatmal district.

Shah said BJP is determined to amend the Waqf Act, regardless of stiff political opposition. "In Karnataka, an entire village received a notice from the waqf board claiming ownership of land. Don't you all agree the Waqf Act should



Home minister Amit Shah said at an election rally that PM Modi will amend Waqf Act regardless of stiff political opposition

be amended," he asked the crowd at another rally. After a resounding 'yes' from rallyists, Shah said "No matter how much Uddhavji and Sharad Pawar oppose it, Modi will amend Waqf Act." Shah said, "Uddhav babu, on the one hand you did not visit Ram Temple in Ayodhya and on the other you agreed to give Rs 1,000 crore to build mosques. 'Chullu bhar paani mein doob maro, doob maro' (You should be greatly ashamed) I want to say to Rahul Gandhi, Sharad Pawar and Uddhav, that no matter how hard you try, we won't allow reservations for Muslims in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Maharashtra."

Shah said state Congress

president Nana Patole had recently met Muslim leaders and agreed to their multiple demands in lieu of votes for MVA. Shah also criticised Thackeray for his party's alleged opposition to renaming Aurangabad and Osmanabad, stating, "The real Shiv Sena is with BJP now. Your party is only UBT Sena."

Shah then trained his guns on Congress, alleging it plans to reallocate reservations meant for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and OBCs to Muslims. "In Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Maharashtra, Muslims will never get reservation," Daring Rahul Gandhi to laud Veer Savarkar and Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thacker-

ray Shah went on to criticise the Congress MP's botched electoral promises. "He promised money into your accounts if they win Maharashtra, but Congress made a similar promise in Karnataka and Telangana, and it's not implemented there."

Shah said BJP's track record of fulfilling promises is unblemished. "Ladki Bahin scheme is a roaring success and we have plans to raise its benefits after elections." Taking potshots at the Nehru-Gandhi clan, Shah said Rahul's political career has failed to take off. "A plane named Rahul has crashed 20 times. Sonaji is trying for the 21st time to help in its take-off, but I think it will crash at Nagpur airport."

Addressing welfare measures, Shah said that under PM Narendra Modi, households in Maharashtra are receiving 5 kg of grain and will soon get additional supplies of oil, spices and condiments to ensure food security throughout the year.

Later, addressing a rally at Chandrapur, Shah said the Maoist threat will be eliminated from Maharashtra, while announcing a deadline of March 31, 2026, to wipe out the ultras from Chhattisgarh.

PM's plane faces snag at Deoghar airport, delays his Delhi return

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aircraft faced a technical issue at Deoghar airport in Jharkhand on Friday, causing a delay in his return to Delhi. The snag occurred after the PM attended an event in Bihar's Jammu, marking the 150th birth anniversary of tribal leader Birsa Munda, celebrated as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas.

After flying by helicopter to Jammu and back, Modi's aircraft encountered a fault as it prepared for take-off. Sources confirmed that the issue was detected while the Prime Minister was on board, prompting a halt. Efforts to rectify the problem were unsuccessful, leading to a delay of over two hours.

A backup Indian Air Force plane was dispatched from Delhi to Deoghar, ensuring the Prime Minister's safe return to the capital. Deoghar deputy commissioner Vishal Sagar confirmed that Modi departed on the alternative aircraft once it arrived.

Earlier in the day, Modi addressed two rallies in Jharkhand, criticising Congress and its alliance with Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. He accused the opposition of conspiring against tribal and backward communities by threatening reservation policies.

Modi's visit came just days before the second phase of Jharkhand assembly elections, scheduled for Nov 20. TNN

'Vilasrao was best CM, knew tactics to head coalition govt'

A year ago, Maharashtra deputy CM Ajit Pawar had revolted against his uncle Sharad Pawar and walked away with not just legislators but NCP's name and symbol. Despite his party's dismal performance in the Lok Sabha polls, he exuded confidence during an interview with TOI's Prafulla Marpakwar about the assembly poll outcome. Excerpts:

A few days ago, you said there was a meeting in Delhi in 2019 that was attended by Gautam Adani, Praful Patel, home minister Amit Shah, Sharad Pawar, Devendra Fadnis and you. Later, you said the meeting did take place but Adani did not attend it, while Sharad Pawar has confirmed Adani's presence.

There is no question of a U-turn. It's a fact the meeting did take place, but Adani was not present. Several meetings were held in Delhi for govt formation, and I attended a few along with Praful Patel and others. I have no comments on the statement by Sharad Pawar; he has been meeting industrialists for seeking investments in the state.

You have been at loggerheads with your political mentor and uncle Sharad Pawar. In fact, in your hometown, your cousin is contesting against you.

I have no comments to make on our family matters. My entire focus is on the assembly elections.

What will be the outcome of the assembly elections?

Mahayuti is contesting unitedly. It should not be hard to cross the 175 mark. We are



TOI INTERVIEW determined to retain office

Mahayuti has announced several populist schemes. Do we have adequate funds for implementation?

We will implement the Ladki Bahin and other schemes in letter and spirit. We have made a budgetary provision of Rs 78,000 crore for all the schemes. Our total budget outlay stands at Rs 6.5 lakh crore, while expenditure on salary, pension and interest on loans stands at Rs 3.5 lakh crore. So if our financial situation is quite sound to meet the expenditure. On the contrary, it will not be possible for MVA to implement the 'five guarantees' it has given as the total cost of the guarantees will be Rs 3.5 lakh crore. We have geared up our revenue mobilization and will enhance GST mobilisation, stamp duty on registration and excise duty on liquor products.

You worked under more than half a dozen CMs. Who was the best?

I had occasion to work under several CMs. In my opinion, Vilasrao Deshmukh, who was CM on two occasions, was the best CM. We are in an era of coalition politics, and there is no possibility of a single-party govt at the national or state level. Deshmukh had developed the tactics of heading a coalition govt.

Are you in the race for the CM's post?

I am not in the race. The CM will be decided after results are out, at the meeting of the Mahayuti legislature party.

During LS polls, your party's performance was dismal, you won only one seat out of four you contested.

Post-LS polls, the situation has changed, voters will certainly vote for Mahayuti candidates. People have realized Mahayuti alone will deliver results. Key factors during LS polls, particularly the issue of reservation, have changed, which will help Mahayuti improve its tally.

At tribal heartland, Rahul again flashes his red book, vows to hold caste census

ASRP/Mukesh@timesofindia.com

Ranchi: LS leader of opposition Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused the Narendra Modi govt and BJP of attempting to "kill" the Constitution while emphasising that Congress was fighting to protect the country and its people as he vowed a caste census in Jharkhand if the INDIA bloc govt returned to office.



Rahul was speaking at his maiden rally in tribal heartland Santhal Pargana for the second phase of the assembly polls on Nov 20. Santhal Pargana has been in the spotlight as BJP has made alleged



Cong MP Rahul Gandhi said only agenda of RSS, BJP was to create divisions among communities

influx from Bangladesh a key poll plank, claiming most such illegal immigrants have settled in this region.

Rahul flashed his familiar red book on the Constitution and reiterated that BJP and RSS often speak along caste and communal lines to divide the nation. "I want to tell you BJP and RSS

don't believe in the Constitution and its virtues. This isn't just a red-coloured book, it contains the values of Bhimrao Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Bursu Munda....

They spoke of uniting the country and its people, but Modi, BJP and RSS do just the opposite," Rahul said in Mahagama constituency's Mehrama in Godda district of Santhal Parganas.

Posing questions to the PM and BJP, Rahul said, "They won't talk about jobs, unemployment, farmers' unrest, or the plight of Dalits, OBCs, tribals, and other underprivileged communities." "Their only agenda is to create divisions among communities, castes, and religions because it's convenient for them to keep people distracted while they work for their

billionaire friends like Adani and Ambani," Rahul said in his oft-repeated claims.

Rahul then went on to cite promises made in Congress's Jharkhand manifesto, including a caste census and removal of the 50% ceiling on reservations. "We are committed to a caste census in Jharkhand as it will be a game changer for the country, providing a true understanding of its realities. While Modi will never do it, we will. Additionally, we will increase OBC, ST, and SC reservations, which the BJP govt has curtailed in the past. In Jharkhand, the BJP reduced OBC reservation from 27% to 14%, which we will restore. Similarly, ST reservation will be increased from 26% to 28%, and SC reservation from 10% to 12%," Rahul added.

PM in vicinity, Rahul copter's takeoff stalled; Cong cries foul

New Delhi: With Rahul Gandhi stranded in Godda after authorities didn't allow his flight to take off on Friday afternoon, Congress complained to the Election Commission that there is an absence of level playing field for the opposition, which is limiting the party's poll campaign in Jharkhand.

The party even alleged that BJP is using the control of govt to clamp down on the opposition selection rallies. Rahul was to fly from Godda to Deoghar for an election rally, but was told that his helicopter could not take off as PM Modi was in the vicinity.

Congress's Jairam Ramesh wrote to the EC: "They (Rahul's team) have been informed that due to the protocol of other leaders in the vicinity, a no-fly zone restriction had been put in place. In fact, due to the said delay, all subsequent programmes of Rahul Gandhi (for which prior permission had been secured) are now either being delayed or cancelled."

"We request your commission to urgently intervene in this situation and ensure that the level playing field is not disrupted in such a manner. If such a situation is allowed to prevail, then the ruling regime (at the Centre) and its leaders can always take undue advantage of such protocols and limit the election campaign of opposition leaders," he added.

Congress general secretary KC Venugopal said, "This mistreatment took place on Munda Ji's jayanti, when Gandhi was in his birthplace to commemorate his contributions towards adwasi rights." TNN

After Ajit Pawar, BJP netas too oppose 'Batenge toh...' slogan

Mohammed Akhif @timesofindia.com

Sambhajinagar: UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath's "Batenge toh katenge" slogan is causing heartburn in BJP after raising the hackles of its Mahayuti ally NCP.

Davs after NCP president and deputy CM Ajit Pawar declared in Beed that such a slogan wouldn't work in Maharashtra, two prominent faces in BJP — MLC Pankaja Munde and Raya Sabha MP Ashok Chavan — have expressed reservations about it. "My politics is different. I won't support it (the slogan) just because I belong to the same party (as Adityanath). My belief is that we should work only for development," Pankaja, a BJP national secretary, was quoted as saying in an interview. Although she was quick to clarify that her remark had been misconstrued, the tremors within were hard to miss.

Chavan added to BJP's discomfiture when he told a TV channel, "This 'batenge toh katenge' slogan has not been given by BJP, it has come from a third party."

In another statement to a news agency the same day, the former CM said Adityanath's words had "no relevance" and was "not in good taste". "I don't think people will appreciate it. I am not in favour of such slogans either," Chavan said.

BJP general secretary Vinod Tawde said there was nothing contentious about what the UP CM said. "Batenge toh katenge" is a real



Prominent BJP faces Ashok Chavan and Pankaja Munde have expressed reservations about it

ity Pandits in Kashmir were not united and they paid a heavy price for it. In the recent Lok Sabha election, Mahayuti was leading in five assembly segments in Dhule, but in the Malegaon segment, it suffered a setback.

Tawde said caste-based divisions were detrimental to the country's interest. "If the nation is divided, others take advantage. Therefore, we are also saying, 'Ek hai toh safe hai' (We are safe if we are together)," he said, referring to PM Narendra Modi's slogan at poll rallies in Maharashtra and Jharkhand.

Deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis attributed edaily NCP's distaste for Adityanath's slogan to lack of understanding about what it implies. "For decades, Ajit dada was part of an ideology where secularism means only criticising Hindutva... (It means there is no secularism among them, those who labelled themselves as secularists," Fadnis said.

NCP (SCP) MP Supriya Sule said the responses to Adityanath's slogan had exposed divisions within Mahayuti and BJP.

MVA assured Ulema of ban on RSS in Maha, claims Fadnis

Pune: Congress headed MVA has assured All India Muslim Personal Law Board member Sajad Nomani that it would ban RSS in the state if Ulema helps the alliance return to govt, deputy CM Devendra Fadnis said Friday at a rally in Pune's Kasba Peth.

Fadnis presented as proof a portion of a video purportedly featuring Nomani, in which he says that if the Mahayuti coalition were to be defeated in the assembly polls, the BJP headed govt at the Centre wouldn't last long, reports Anurag Bende.

The deputy chief minister proceeded to dismiss MVAs alleged promise in return for Ulema's support as an unrealistic aspiration.

"Banning RSS is beyond their aukat (capacity)," said Fadnis, insisting that there were 16 other contentious demands that MVA had agreed to fulfil if voted back to govt.

"Along with an assurance to ban RSS, the MVA members have accepted other demands, including releasing Muslims arrested in riot cases registered in Maharashtra since 2012, and 10% reservation for the community," he said.

Fadnis reiterated his call to "dharma yudh" (defence of righteousness), pitting it against what BJP terms "vote jihad". "They are resorting to the same 'vote jihad' tactic that they used in the Lok Sabha campaign. They won't be successful," Fadnis said.

"I came here to awaken voters to unite against vote jihad. Every vote is important for our own existence. If we do not wake up now, we will never be able to respond."

MNS cancels Shivaji Park rally, only UBT in queue

Mumbai: MNS president Raj Thackeray Friday said he will not hold his closing election rally at Dadar's Shivaji Park on Sunday as the state urban development (UD) department is yet to grant his party permission for the event, reports Chaitanya Marpakwar.

Now, only Uddhav Thackeray-headed Shiv Sena (UBT)'s application seeking to host its rally at the iconic ground remains. Since the UD department hasn't given it nod so far, Sena (UBT) has begun preparations for MVA's closing rally at BKC on Sunday evening.

Expanding his decision to cancel the Shivaji Park rally, Raj said: "Though just over one day remains, govt hasn't given permission. We have just 1.5 days, and it's hard to organise a rally in 1.5 days."

Cong has no blueprint, lying on caste census, says Rajnath

Dhritiman Ray @mesofindia.com

Ranchi: Defence minister Rajnath Singh said in Jharkhand Friday that Congress has been deceiving the electorate by promising a nationwide caste census, as it does not have any blueprint for identifying the castes and determining their quota.

"Rahul Gandhi does not know how many castes exist in the country. In 2011, they conducted a caste census, but did not publish its report. The social welfare department conducted a census a few years ago and it was found there are nearly 8,000 castes. Congress does not have a blueprint on how they plan to implement caste



Rajnath said Rahul Gandhi does not know how many castes exist in the country

based reservations, and which caste gets how much reservation. They are only deceiving the people," Singh said at a rally in Khirri (ST) constituency in Ranchi.

Earlier in the day, Singh addressed rallies in Tundi in Dhanbad and Mahagama in Godda. He said the BJP headed NDA would win two-thirds of the 43 assembly seg-

ments that voted in the first phase. Attacking the Hemant Soren headed INDIA bloc in the state, Singh said only a person who has not been tainted should become the CM. "Three CMs of Jharkhand have served time in prison. On the other hand, look at our CMs — Babul Marandi, Raghu Das and Arjun Munda. No one can point fingers at them for graft," he said.

Citing Chhattisgarh's instance, Singh said a stable BJP govt for two straight terms is imperative for Jharkhand. "While Jharkhand has slid downhill in the last few years, Chhattisgarh has taken its place among the developed states. It happened because there was a stable BJP govt for three terms."

Natural for those in love to hug & kiss, it's not sexual harassment: Madras HC

Madurai. Hugging and kissing between two persons in love is not sexual harassment, rather it is quite natural, observed Madras HC recently quashing a trial court proceedings against a 20-year-old man in Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin, reports **K Kaushik**

Srivaikuntam All Women Police had charged the man with sexually harassing a 19-year-old woman. In 2023, the man filed a court petition seeking to quash the FIR registered against him.

As per the case, the man and woman had been in love for three years. In Nov 2022, he took the woman to a lonely place where they talked from 9pm to 12am. Suddenly, he hugged the woman and kissed her. The woman returned home and informed her parents about the relationship. She later asked the man to marry her. But the man refused and started avoiding her. Following this, the woman made a police complaint, based on which a case was registered against him for offence of sexual harassment.

Justice N Anand Venkatesh observed, "To constitute an offence under section 354-A(1)(i) of IPC, a man must commit physical contact and make advances involving unwelcome and explicit sexual overtures. Even if the allegations are taken as it is, it is quite natural for two people in the teenage, who are having a love affair, to hug or kiss each other. By no stretch, this can constitute an offence under section 354-A(1)(i) of IPC."

No offence has been made out against the petitioner even if the allegations made in the FIR are taken as it is, therefore, criminal proceedings against the petitioner will result in abuse of law, the judge observed.

HP moves SC to get parliamentary secys' appointment okayed

New Delhi: Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu led Congress govt of Himachal Pradesh has rushed to Supreme Court seeking to validate appointment of six parliamentary secretaries based on a 2006 state law that was quashed by high court two days ago for being illegal and unconstitutional, reports **Dhananjay Mahapatra**.

The Sukhu govt, facing internal dissension for some time which was reflected in the loss of Congress candidate A M Singhvi after a tie with the BJP candidate in Ra, va Sabha election in Feb, revealed its real apprehension.

"The legal consequence would be that six parliamentary secretaries, who are also MLAs are likely to face disqualification under Article 192 of the Constitution as the protection granted to them from the office of profit norms has been taken away, without adjudication, causing political instability," the state govt said. It questioned the correctness of HC's Nov 13 judgment and sought a stay. The appeal is likely to be mentioned before CJI Sanjiv Khanna for urgent hearing on Monday.

The state govt said HC erred in finding similarities between Himachal Pradesh Parliamentary Secretaries (Appointment, Salaries, Allowances, Powers, Privileges and Amenities) Act, enacted in 2006 by the Congress-led Govt of Virbhadr Singh, and Assam Parliamentary Secretaries (Appointment, Salaries and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2004 which was enacted by the Tarun Gogoi-led Congress govt. It said while the Assam law gave status of minister to parliamentary secretaries, it was not under the Himachal law. The Sukhu govt said even though parliamentary secretaries in the state did not draw salaries equivalent to ministers, HC undertook a "hasty, haphazard exercise" to equate parliamentary secretaries as part of political executive, even though they did not perform any executive function.

Comedian Faruqui & Shraddha killer on Bishnoi hitlist

Mumbai. Standup comedian Munawar Faruqui and Aftab Poonawala, who is facing trial for the gruesome murder of his Paigah-based girlfriend Shraddha Walkar in Delhi in 2022, were on the hitlist of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, the architect of the murder of former state minister and NCP leader Baba Siddique, police said, reports **Ahmed Ali**. This revelation came out during the interrogation of Shivkumar Gautam alias Shiva, the main shooter in the Siddique murder case.

Gautam told police that he wanted to eliminate Siddique. "Lonkar told Gautam that another module that he had assigned to target Faruqui may meet with success before them. This prompted Gautam and the other two shooters, Gurnali Singh and Dhanraj Kashyap, to expedite their task on Dushera," said a police officer.

In Sept, the group planning the attack on Faruqui had checked into a Delhi hotel where the comedian was put up as he was to perform in the Capital. The gang was furious over his remarks on Hindu deities. However, with the timely action of the intelligence agencies, the attack was foiled. In Oct, Mumbai police enhanced Faruqui's security in view of the threat from the Bishnoi gang.

Meanwhile, following reports that the arrested accused Gaurav Apune, Rupesh Mohol, as well as Gautam and Lonkar had visited a naxal-affected region of Jharkhand and met a key member, Mumbai police have intimated National Investigation Agency, which is likely to take over the investigation or register a fresh case.

It is to notify that, the IFB Ref No MMPCL/Manpower/Tender/24-25/T2 for providing manpower for loading & unloading of milk cans has been extended till 25 Nov 2024, 05:00 PM. For more details, please visit below web site

<https://www.maahimilk.com/Business-Inquiry/Tenders>



Maahi EXTENSION OF IFB

It is to notify that, the IFB Ref No MMPCL/Manpower/Tender/24-25/T2 for providing manpower for loading & unloading of milk cans has been extended till 25 Nov 2024, 05:00 PM. For more details, please visit below web site

<https://www.maahimilk.com/Business-Inquiry/Tenders>

Scan for Download

Issued By: Maahi Milk Products Company Limited

5 kids drown in Odisha in separate Kartik Purnima accidents

At least five children drowned in separate accidents in three Odisha districts while trying to float or retrieve miniature boats in water bodies on the occasion of Baita Bandana, to mark Kartik Purnima on Friday. While two tragedies claimed the lives of three children in Balasore, one death each occurred in Cuttack and Malkangiri districts. In Balasore district's Panishapada village, two girls — aged around five — drowned after accidentally slipping into the village pond in a bid to fetch miniature boats. MN

retrieve miniature boats in water bodies on the occasion of Baita Bandana, to mark Kartik Purnima on Friday. While two tragedies claimed the lives of three children in Balasore, one death each occurred in

Cuttack and Malkangiri districts. In Balasore district's Panishapada village, two girls — aged around five — drowned after accidentally slipping into the village pond in a bid to fetch miniature boats. MN



कार्यालय कार्यपालन मंत्री
निराक्षर नगर प्रमंडल स्तरीय, मुजफ्फरपुर
E-mail : tcdtrawara@gmail.com

शुद्धि पत्र

इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक 1299 दिनांक 24.10.2024 के द्वारा निर्गत निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या 02SBD/2024-25] PR- 011266 (WRD) 2024-25 के क्रम संख्या 03 में उक्त निविदा कागजात खंडनलगाइ एच अपलोड करने की अवधि दिनांक 09.11.2024 के 10:00 बजे पूर्वानुमति से दिनांक 16.11.2024 के 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक के स्थान पर दिनांक 09.11.2024 के 10:00 बजे पूर्वानुमति से दिनांक 22.11.2024 के 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक पड़ा जाय एच कम संख्या 05 में उक्त निविदा तकनीकी बीड खंडन की निधि एच समय दिनांक 16.11.2024 के 3:00 बजे अपराह्न के स्थान पर दिनांक 22.11.2024 के 3:30 बजे अपराह्न पड़ा जाय । येन सभी शर्तें बंधावट रहेंगी ।

कार्यालय कार्यपालन मंत्री
निराक्षर नगर प्रमंडल स्तरीय, मुजफ्फरपुर

PR- 012492 (WRD) 2024-25

नरो की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

The Chief Executive officer, Assam Skill University Project (ASUP) ("the Purchaser") invites online Bids from eligible bidders/suppliers for supply of the below mentioned equipment

| # | Package No. | Package Name | Deadline of Submission |
|---|------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| | | | Date Time |
| 1 | GS/02/ASU/IT/001 | Desktop Computers for ASU | 16 December 2024 14:00 Hours (IST) |
| 2 | GS/02/ASU/IT/002 | UPS for ASU | 13 December 2024 14:00 Hours (IST) |
| 3 | GS/02/ASU/IT/003 | Interactive Board and Projector for ASU | 13 December 2024 14:00 Hours (IST) |
| 4 | GS/02/ASU/IT/004 | Server and NAS for ASU | 16 December 2024 14:00 Hours (IST) |
| 5 | GS/02/ASU/IT/005 | Printing Devices and Workstation for ASU | 16 December 2024 14:00 Hours (IST) |
| 6 | GS/02/ASU/IT/006 | Air Conditioner for ASU | 16 December 2024 14:00 Hours (IST) |

Interested bidders may download and submit their Bid electronically using the e-procurement portal <https://assamitenders.gov.in/>

Sd/-
CEO, ASUP cum Registrar, ASU

Janasanyog/CF/2212/24/15-Nov-24

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD
(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)
Head Office : Thiruvananthapuram-14,
(Telephone No. 0471-2945606, 2945646)
E-mail : edrugs.kmscl@kerala.gov.in,
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021676

No KMSCL/ED/107/2024 Date : 15.11.2024

E-TENDER NOTICE

Online bids are invited for the procurement of Recombinant Anti Haemophilic factor VIII for the year 2024-25 from manufacturers/direct importers/ oan licensees

| Sl. No. | Tender No. and Date | Item Name | No. of Items |
|---------|--|--|--------------|
| 1. | KMSCL/ED/HAEM/RC/2024/025 dtd 15.11.2024 | Recombinant Anti Haemophilic factor VIII 500 IU | 1 |
| 2 | KMSCL/ED/HAEM/RC/2024/026 dtd 15.11.2024 | Recombinant Anti Haemophilic factor VIII 1000 IU | 1 |
| 3. | KMSCL/ED/HAEM/RC/2024/027 dtd 15.11.2024 | Recombinant Anti Haemophilic factor VIII 1500 IU | 1 |

Schedule of dates

| | Date | Time |
|--|------------|-------------------|
| Last date of online uploading of tenders | 05.12.2024 | 05:00 pm. onwards |
| Date of technical bid opening | 09.12.2024 | 11:00 am. onwards |

Tenders shall be downloaded and submitted online through the e-tender portal www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR (Tender Inviting Authority)

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan Race Course Road
Bengaluru - 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383 website : www.kiadb.in

No.IADB/ENGG/PMC/EPTND-EP-10/529/2024-25 Date: 14.11.2024

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR PROVIDING PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY SERVICES.
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB is inviting tenders under Quality Based Consultancy System (QCBS) as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Consulting Firms under two cover system for the following works:

Name of the works : 1) Project Management Consultancy Services for the work of Construction of 10 MLD Tertiary Treatment Plant near Bidadi at Byramangala Lake on Vrishabhavathi river for supplying to Bidadi, Shanamangala & Harohalli Industrial Areas, including Operation and Maintenance for a period of 10 years. (3rd call). 2) Providing Project Management Consultancy Services for the work of formation of industrial layout at Japanese Industrial Park (General Industrial Area), Vasanthanarasapura Industrial, III Phase, Tumakuru District. (3rd Call). The last date and time of receipt of tender is : 28.11.2024 upto 4.30 pm. Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the E-Procurement Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/3224/Zen/2024-25

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan Race Course Road
Bengaluru - 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383 website : www.kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-DPR-08/531/2024-25 Date: 14.11.2024

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB invites tenders from reputed consultants/firms under two cover bid system having an office at Bengaluru with vast experience and proven record of similar nature of work for project mentioned below:-

Name of the works : 1) Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) Including Economic Analysis, Surveying, Layout Plan, Design, Preparation of Estimates, Cost Structure etc., for the proposed Shivaramapada Industrial Area at Malur Taluk of Kolar District. (Extent 1637.50 A). 2) Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) Including Economic Analysis, Surveying, Layout Plan, Design, Preparation of Estimates, Cost Structure etc., for the proposed Jangamakote Industrial Area at Siddlaghatta Taluk of Chikkaballapura District. (Extent 2823.12 A). 3) Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) Including Economic Analysis, Surveying, Layout Plan, Design, Preparation of Estimates, Cost Structure etc., for the proposed Devanahalli General Industrial Area (ITIR), Phase-2, Doddballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District. (Extent 1118.50A). The last date and time of receipt of tender is : 28.11.2024 upto 4.00 pm. Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer-1, KIADB, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/3225/Zen/2024-25

कार्यालय कार्यपालन मंत्री
नया भोपाल संभाग लोक निर्माण विभाग भोपाल (म.प्र.)

निविदा सूचना
निविदा सूचना क्रमांक 13/व.ले.लि./2024-25 भोपाल, दिनांक 11.11.2024
निर्माणाधीन कार्य हेतु निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। उम्मीदवार कार्य का विस्तृत विवरण mptenders.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।

| क्र. | चौकट नंबर | कार्य का नाम | प्रथम आमंत्रण | टेंडर की अनुमति (रु. लाख में) | आयतन राशि |
|---------------|---------------------|--|---------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2024 PWDDB 381798 1 | नया भोपाल संभाग, लो निर्माण भोपाल के अंतर्गत ई-1 से ई-4 ओर कॉलोनी सोलरपैरी कान्स्ट्रक्शंस एवं अन्य मार्गों पर फर्नीचरिंग एवं बी.टी. नवनीकरण का कार्य। | प्रथम आमंत्रण | 499.51 | 499510.00 |
| 2. | 2024 PWDDB 381799 1 | नया भोपाल संभाग, लो निर्माण, भोपाल के अंतर्गत 45 बंगला नया टी.टी. नया माइक्रो पार्क क्र. 1 से 6, लिंक रोड क्र. 3 एवं शिवाजी नगर के पट्टाचमारी 60 फिट चौड़ी सड़क पर फर्नीचरिंग एवं बी.टी. नवनीकरण का कार्य। | प्रथम आमंत्रण | 399.78 | 399780.00 |
| 3 | 2024 PWDDB 381800 1 | उपसंभाग क्र. -4, लो निर्माण, भोपाल के अंतर्गत संस्थापक क्र. -1 (74 बंगला) स्थित बंगला नं. सी. 2, बैलघुमल चौड़ कार्य। | प्रथम आमंत्रण | 43.00 | 50000.00 |
| योग :- | | | | 942.29 | |

उम्मीदवार वेबसाइट ऑनलाइन भूगतान करने के उपरान्त निविदा प्रपत्र (टेण्डर डॉक्यूमेंट) वेबसाइट के माध्यम से प्राप्त हो सकता है। निविदा प्रपत्र प्राप्त एवं सर्वाधिकार करने की अंतिम तिथि 29.11.2024 राय 5.30 बजे निर्धारित है। निविदा में किसी भी प्रकार का संशोधन होने पर उसे उम्मीदवार वेबसाइट पर देखा जा सकता है। विस्तृत एवं आदि. टी.एस. अन्य जानकारी उपररक वेबसाइट में देखी जा सकता है।

Sd/-
कार्यालय कार्यपालन मंत्री
नया भोपाल संभाग लोक निर्माण विभाग (म.प्र.)

"सफलता ही सफलता है" G-18975/24

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DIVISION KATHUA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
e-NIT No. 54 of 2024-25 Dated : 13/11/2024
email : phkathua@gmail.com

For and on behalf of U. Governor of UT of J&K, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Kathua invites e-tenders from reputed and successful Bidders/ Firms/Companies / Consortia between bidder/firm and Financier of "A & ABOVE Class" registered in JKPWD/CPWD/Railways/MES or any other state Government for "Augmentation of water supply scheme Hiranagar Town under AMRUT 2.0 and Operation and Maintenance of scheme for 05 Years". The bidding process shall be completed online on www.kjtenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1" consisting of Pre-Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions, Scope of work and Technical Specifications and Cover 2" consisting of Financial Bid on Percentage rate basis, in the prescribed format.

| Sr. No. | Particulars of the work | Estimated Cost (Lacs) | Tender fee (in INR) | Earnest money Deposit (in INR) | Bid Validity | Time of Completion of work (month) |
|---------|--|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1. | Augmentation of water supply scheme Hiranagar Town under AMRUT 2.0 and Operation and Maintenance of scheme for 05 Years under AMRUT 2.0 (Work wise details given Annexure I) | Rs. 1625.79 | 7500/- | 2% of Estimated Cost | 180 days | (15 months) |

Position of funds : Approved Under AMRUT 2.0
The tender inviting authority is Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Kathua.

Critical Dates .

| i | Publish Date | 13/11/2024 |
|-----|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ii | Document Download/start Date | 13/11/2024 |
| iii | Bid submission start date | 13/11/2024 |
| iv | Pre-Bid Meeting date | 18/11/2024 |
| v | Bid submission end date | 27/11/2024 upto 4:00 PM |
| vi | Date and time of Bid opening | 28/11/2024 at 2:00 PM onwards |

1. Bid documents can be accessed and downloaded from the website www.kjtenders.gov.in
Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Kathua

DI/ No DP/1-8838/24/16 11 2024

Software Technology Parks of India
(An Autonomous Society under Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Govt. of India)

Employment Notice No. 2111/STPI-LHQ/2024-2025

Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) a premier Science & Technology organization of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Govt. of India invites applications from eligible candidates to fill the following Group 'A' S&T and Non-S&T vacancies through Absorption, Direct Recruitment and Deputation mode -

| Post Code | Name of the Post | Pay Level (Rs. in Lakh) | No. of Posts | Age limit (Max) |
|---------------|---|-------------------------------|--------------|---|
| E - 5 (S&T) | Member Technical Staff- E-V (Scientist 'F') | Level 13A (Rs. 131100-216900) | 03 (UR) | For Absorption/ Deputation basis 56 years For Direct Recruitment basis 48 years (Relaxation as per Govt. of India rules) |
| E - 4 (S&T) | Member Technical Staff- E-IV (Scientist 'E') | Level 13 (Rs. 123100-215900) | 01 (OBC) | For Absorption/ Deputation basis 56 years For Direct Recruitment basis 46 years (Relaxation as per Govt. of India rules) |
| E - 2 (S&T) | Member Technical Staff - E-II (Scientist 'C') | Level 11 (Rs. 67700-208700) | 01 (ST) | For Absorption/ Deputation basis 56 years For Direct Recruitment basis 36 years (Relaxation as per Govt. of India rules) |
| A-7 (Non-S&T) | Sr. Administrative Officer (A-VII) | Level 11 (Rs. 67700-208700) | 01 (UR) | For Absorption/ Deputation basis 56 years For Direct Recruitment basis 45 years (Relaxation as per Govt. of India rules) |

For information on Essential Qualification and Experience, how to apply, Application Fee General Terms and Conditions, Screening/ Selection Criteria, Opening date for submission of online application, Last/Closing Date of Receipt of Online Application etc the candidates may refer to STPI website www.stpi.in

Sd/-
CAO-cum-Registrar, STPI

Office of Superintending Engineer, Rampur Circle, P.W.D. Rampur
Short Term E-Procurement Tender Notice

Letter No.5647/E -Tender R.C.R/24 25 Dated - 30.10.2024

On behalf of the Governor of UP tender for following work are invited by the Superintending Engineer Rampur Circle. PWD Rampur online on website <http://e-tender.up.nic.in> from registered contractors with UP PWD (as per column no. 10). As the sugarcane crushing season of the year 2024-25 is starting soon and the approval is received on 30.10.2024 short term tender is being invited. The bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract. Bids must be downloaded online from 18:00 AM on date 18.11.2024 to 03:00 PM on dated 25.11.2024 and the technical bids will be opened online on date 25.11.2024 at 03:30 PM in Office of Superintending Engineer Rampur Circle PWD Rampur and Financial bids of the qualified bidders will be opened on date & time as notified.

2. Details of the works are following

| S. No. | Dist. | Name of the work | Estimated Cost Excl. GST (Rs. in Lakh) | Total Cost Excl. GST (Rs. in Lakh) | Bid Security (Rs. in Lakh) | Cost of tender docu. (Rs. in Lakh) | Time of completion of the work (including rainy season) | Category of road contr. eligible | Add resu of Exa outine of the actor Engi neer ac cording the work | Add resu of Super inten ding Engi neer | Add resu of Chief Engi neer | |
|--------|-------|---|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 1 | | Rampur to Thapaur road | 160.07 | 12.43 | 172.50 | 10.63 | 12 Months including rainy season (Security will be accepted only net banking) | A & B in Road Category | CD-2 PWD Bids (Reg - Negotiable) | Rampur Circle PWD Rampur | | Mandabadi Zone PWD Mandabadi |
| 2 | | Sambaur to Ishapur road | 198.72 | 15.28 | 214.00 | 12.70 | | | | | | |
| 3 | | Harwarshwala Mod to Kashiwala road on Koliwana-Kashiwala road | 346.09 | 26.11 | 373.00 | 20.55 | | | | | | |
| 4 | | Kidika to Rajpur road | 196.35 | 15.25 | 211.60 | 12.59 | | | | | | |
| 5 | | Sambaur to Skandapur road | 52.48 | 4.03 | 56.50 | 4.93 | | | | | | |

> All work including 05 years maintenance period after completion of work > The Rate adopted in the BOQ are including all other taxes but excluding GST > The Bid Security and tender cost should be deposited online through Net Banking as per Column 7 & 8 in the table. All terms & conditions can be seen on website <http://e-tender.up.nic.in>. The bidder have to login on Prantat URL: <http://www.upgovt.org> Prantat to upload required documents as per Government order no. 873/1/23-27/2024 dt. 25.08.2020 & E.N.O.74/D.D.s up pwd order No. 4659/4M-LC/2020 dt. 27.08.2020

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Ghost towns of Tamil Nadu

Dhanushkodi, the state's most famous no man's land, is uninhabited, yet many others such as Meenakshipuram, which lost its last resident in May, remain deserted



Vinothkumar.N@timesofindia.com

Paananparanar in Sivaganga takes its name from Tamil words for musicians (paanar) and poets (paranar). Now uninhabited, it's been transformed into farmland

M P Srinivasan |
TAMIL SCHOLAR



In July 2021, standing in the crumbling confines of his home, 73-year-old Kandasamy Naicker, a resident of Meenakshipuram in Tuticorin district, had told TOI: "My father and grandfather lived and died here, and I too will die here." Kandasamy died on May 24. With his passing Meenakshipuram lost its last resident, marking the end of a once-prosperous village. "People had to walk 4km for water, so they gradually left. Only my father refused to leave," said Bala Krishnan, Kandasamy's son.

While the state claims to be among the top places in India when it comes to most human development metrics, a considerable number of abandoned villages or 'ghost towns' such as Meenakshipuram exist in Tamil Nadu, particularly in the southern districts.

Known as 'pechilla gramangal' (speechless villages) in Tamil, historically, the reasons for the mass exodus varied from floods and droughts to epidemics and urban legends of being cursed. "In ancient Tamilakam, people abandoned villages because

of war and invasions," says former professor and Tamil scholar M P Srinivasan from Madurai. Today, though it is in search of greener pastures, says Professor S Sridaya Rajan, founder chair at the International Institute of Migration and Development in Kerala.

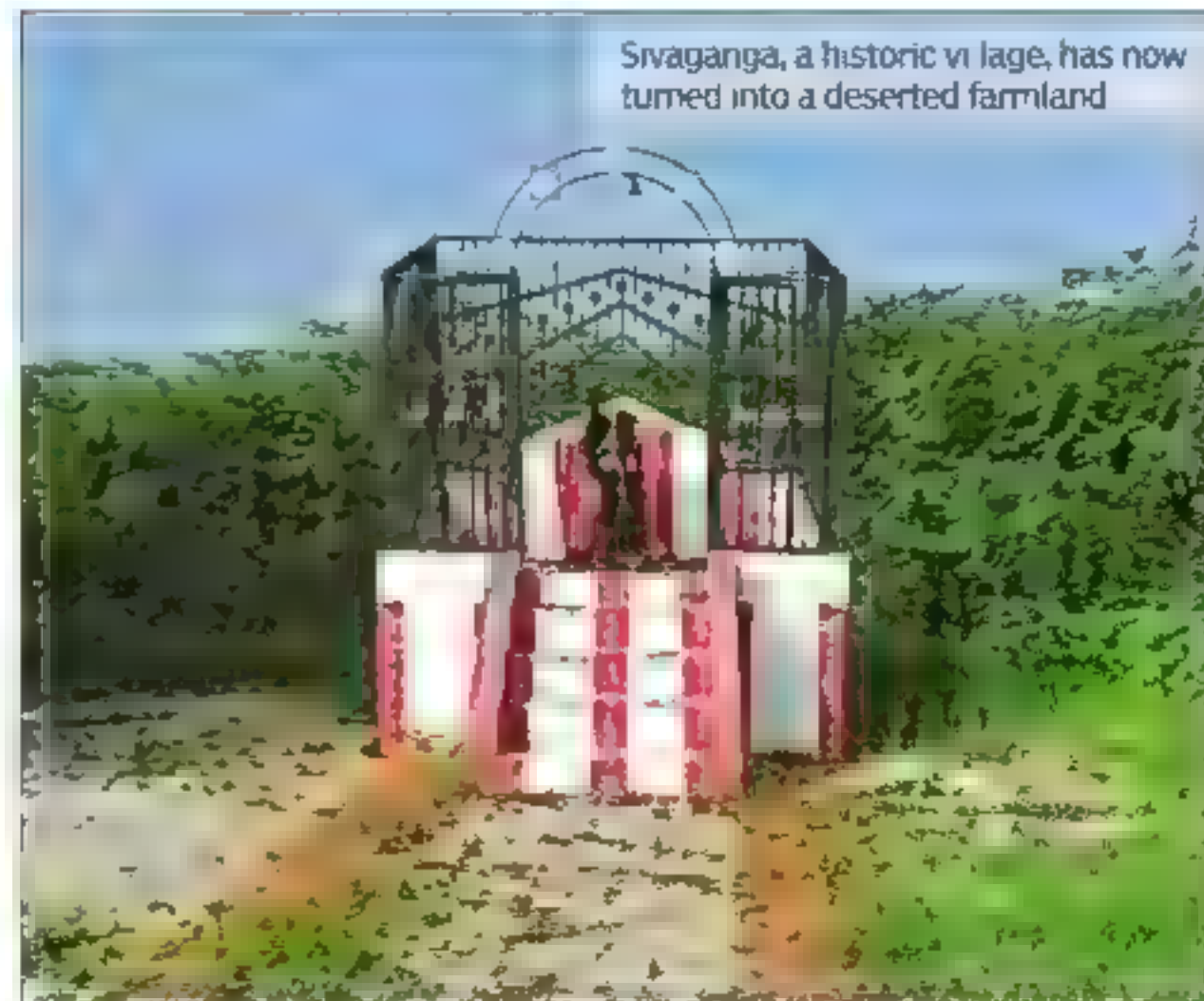
"There are many references to uninhabited villages in Sangam literature," says Srinivasan. "In the text 'Natrinal', the song 'Venjuna vendhan pagai' cites invasion by an enemy country as a reason for people fleeing villages. A song in 'Akanaanooru' describes how when people abandoned a village, a deity painted on the wall of a temple also disappeared."

While migration was because of war in ancient times, later people began migrating for their livelihood, for better education. In recent years, it is because of climate change. Many of TN's coastal villages may soon become 'uninhabited' because of erosion," says Rajan.

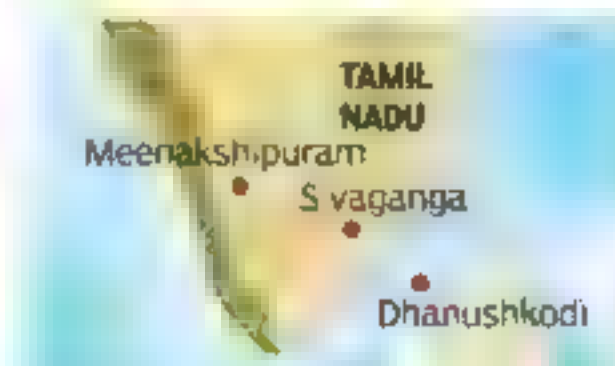
So what happens to the abandoned villages? "Houses fall to ruin, temples go dark, cattle turn feral, roads get damaged, and agricultural land becomes infested with invasive species such as Prosopis juliflora," says Adhimoalam.

A few ghost towns are seeing a revival. Dhanushkodi, at the southeast tip of TN's Pamban Island was left uninhabited after the 1964 Rameswaram cyclone. However, its seaside location and historic temple have made it a tourist spot.

Though the govt has neither legally granted land nor



Sivaganga, a historic village, has now turned into a deserted farmland



LEFT BEHIND

| Village/Town | Why they were abandoned |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dhanushkodi (Ramanathapuram) | Cyclone |
| Paananparanar (Sivaganga) | Drought |
| Thavalaikkulam (Sivaganga) | No rainfall |
| Meenakshipuram (Tuticorin) | Water shortage |
| Mettur (Theni) | Vaigai dam construction |
| Velambur, Sirudhur (Madurai) | Possibly war and invasion |
| Ayakulam (Virudhunagar) | Lack of rainfall |

permitted residents on the island. Dhanushkodi now has numerous huts with solar panels. Inhabited by people of all ages and families are engaged in tourism and fishing as income sources, according to a recent report titled 'Revitalising Dhanushkodi', published in the July-Sept 2024 issue of the Tamil Nadu Journal of Public Health and Medical Research.

"Only after a new stretch of road was laid connecting Pamban Island with Dhanushkodi in 2016-2017, there was a flurry of activity here," says Dr Ajith Brabhu Kumar C, the study's lead author. "Eateries set up in huts popped up. An anganwadi centre was set up too. Dhanushkodi is seeing reverse migration, which has created the need for permanent health services there."

But other abandoned towns are

not so fortunate. "Most become infested with mesquites," says Adhimoalam, general secretary of the Mulla Periyar Vaigai Irrigation Farmers Association.

Srinivasan, from Sivaganga, says there are ancient villages in the district that he abandoned. "Paananparanar, named for musicians ('paanar') and poets ('paranar'), was gifted by a king. Now uninhabited, it's been converted to farmland," he says.

The state govt's revenue department categorises such abandoned villages as 'pechilla gramam' in its records, a term that denotes 'agricultural lands without human habitation' rather than the literal sense of "abandonment," says K Selvan, state general secretary of the TN village administrative officers association. "A 100-acre land may be used for collective farming by farmers commuting daily from nearby villages. Such areas gain names and are classified as revenue villages, even without residents. The govt labels only uninhabited agricultural lands as 'pechilla gramam', and usually has no plans to repopulate them."

Rajan says many villages in Odisha have been classified 'tsunami-ready' following past tsunamis and other disasters. However, many villagers have since migrated to states such as Kerala in search of livelihoods. "People who migrated to Kerala earn ₹20,000 monthly but say they'd be happier with less than half of that if they can earn a living in their Odisha villages. Without govt rehabilitation, these ghost towns can't be repopulated," he says.

Adhimoalam believes ghost villages can be repopulated if the govt stops reallocating grazing lands for development. "These districts are ideal for livestock and animal husbandry, which could strengthen the local economy and help prevent village abandonment," he says.

Cornea transplant wait list to be soon on centralised platform

New Delhi Soon, the list of patients waiting for cornea transplant in India will be available on a centralised platform. While waiting lists for organs such as heart, liver and kidney are available centrally on website of National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO), no such list was available for cornea till date, reports **Durgesh Nandan Jha**.

Recently, NOTTO director Dr Anil Kumar has written to all the states/UTs to issue a directive to registered hospitals and eye banks to share the data related to list of patients waiting for cornea transplant, number of cornea donation and transplantation, and number of cornea stored and utilised.

Cornea is the transparent tissue that covers the eye. It allows light to enter and performs two-thirds of the focusing tasks. For people suffering from vision loss due to irreparable damage of the tissue, transplant is the only option. It involves replacing a diseased or scarred cornea with cornea donated by a deceased person.

Dr Namrata Sharma, a professor of ophthalmology at AIIMS, who is also associated with Eye Bank Association of India, said India needs nearly two lakh corneas per year to treat patients suffering from blindness caused by irreparable damage to the tissue. "In 2023-24, only 49,315 corneas were collected of which 27,394 could be used for transplant," Dr Sharma said, adding that availability of information related to cornea collection and utilisation would help policymakers to ensure optimum utilisation of tissues collected and equitable distribution as well. The NOTTO has said that eye banks operating across the country should have a minimum 100 collections in a year or they could risk losing the licence to operate.

India has about 726 registered eye banks but, govt sources said, only about 200 are operational.

Entering hotel room with man no signal of consent for sex: HC

Panaji: Merely entering a hotel room with a man doesn't imply a woman's consent to sex, the high court of Bombay at Goa held while setting aside a sessions court order discharging a rape accused, reports **Lisa Monteiro**.

Noting that the survivor came out of the hotel room crying and immediately filed a police complaint for rape, Justice Bharat Deshpande said the additional sessions judge had erred in concluding that the woman booking the hotel room and going there with the accused meant she consented to sexual intercourse. The HC directed the trial court to frame charges against the accused for rape and criminal intimidation, saying there was sufficient material to proceed against him.

Justice Deshpande said the sessions judge "has clearly mixed two aspects — going inside with the accused in a room without any protest, and giving consent for what happened in the room".

The survivor alleged that the accused took her to the hotel on the pretext of a meeting with an agent, who was supposed to provide her a job abroad.

No HC relief to Major in false sex complaint case

Bhopal/Jabalpur: Madhya Pradesh HC has declined to give relief to an Army officer who was chargesheeted for falsely accusing a Lt Colonel of sexual harassment.

The petitioner, a Major had alleged that the senior officer made indecent comments at her and tried to grab her hands when she was undergoing a course. After her complaints to seniors allegedly went in vain, she approached the internal committee. An investigation, however, determined it was a fake complaint, and a court of inquiry was ordered against her. The Major challenged it in Armed Forces Tribunal, which did not give her any relief.

A division bench, headed by Chief Justice Suresh Kumar Kait, turned down her plea, saying that since a court of inquiry had already been conducted, court intervention wouldn't be appropriate. **TNN**

Days after deadly crash, grieving Dehradun pushes for safe driving

Wreckage Shown To Kids To Drive Home Message

Kalyan Das | TNN

Dehradun: Uttarakhand capital Dehradun grappled with the devastating aftermath of a car crash that claimed six young lives and left one critically injured as horror details of the accident came in. With the tragedy shaking the city to its core, sparking grief, shock, and a collective determination to tackle the dangers of reckless driving, parents of young adults could be seen bringing their children to Cantt police station to view the mangled remains of the speeding multi-utility vehicle (MUV) that collided with a container truck at ONGC intersection at 1.30am on Tuesday. The wreckage has become a chilling reminder of consequences of negligence behind the wheel.

The victims, aged between 19 and 24, were identified as Gunesh Singh, Kamakshi Singh, Navya Goyal, Rushabh Jain, and Atul Agrawal (all from Dehradun) and Kunal Kukreja from Himachal Pradesh. The lone survivor, Siddhesh Agrawal, 25, remains in critical



The car crash claimed six young lives. The wreckage has become a chilling reminder of consequences of negligence behind the wheel

condition at a local hospital.

Atul, who was driving, reportedly lost control of the vehicle, leading to the fatal collision. Preliminary investigations suggest overspeeding as primary cause of the crash, with the truck driver cleared of fault. Witnesses described the crash site as harrowing, with mangled body parts and mangled metal strewn across the road. Videos from the scene have circulated widely on social media.

The hashtag #DehradunCarAccident trended on social media platforms, with over 6,000 posts on X urging drivers to exercise caution. Reports suggested the group had embarked on a late-night drive following a party at home of sole survivor, reigniting discussions on the dangers of drunk driving. DGP Abhinav Kumar is

sued directives for a state-wide crackdown on traffic violations, including overspeeding, drunken driving, wrong side driving, and overloading. "Vehicles driven under the influence must be seized immediately," Kumar said. He also called for strict penalties for guardians and vehicle owners if minors are caught driving.

Many parents, shaken by the incident, are using the tragedy to educate their children about the risks of reckless driving.

Meanwhile, police on Friday registered a case against an unidentified person under section 106(2) of BNS for "causing death by rash and negligent driving and fleeing the scene." The complaint, filed by Vipin Kumar Agrawal, the survivor's father, demanded a "fair & transparent probe."

5 of wedding party killed in highway crash

Roorkee: Five men from Meerut, travelling as part of a wedding procession to Roorkee, died in a road accident late on Thursday night after their car collided with a divider near Manglaur some 10 km away, overturning multiple times on the Delhi Haridwar national highway. The vehicle was carrying 10 passengers, reports **Tapan Susheel**.

Sujal, 17, and Sonu, 22, died on the spot while Vansh, 20, and Aditya, 19 died at a govt hospital. Kashi, 30, who was admitted to a higher centre in Meerut in critical condition, succumbed to injuries on Friday. The remaining five passengers sustained multiple injuries but are reported to be out of danger.

The 10 young men from Meerut had left for Roorkee in an SUV to join wedding procession of one Manish Kumar. On Thursday, it was around 10pm, near Deoband Tiraha (intersection) in Manglaur, that mishap occurred, with some passengers being flung out of the car and others remaining trapped inside the severely damaged vehicle.

Dip in drunk driving toll in past few years, slight rise in '22: Data

Dipak Dash | timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The gruesome road crash in Dehradun has shocked the nation, but official data show that deaths in road crashes due to drunk driving has been falling for the past few years, except a slight increase in 2022. Data show that while 2,376 persons died in road crashes due to drunk driving in 2019, the numbers reduced to 1,862 and 1,352 in 2020 and 2021, respectively. In 2022, such fatalities increased to 1,503. The road transport ministry is yet to publish data of 2023.

Globally, speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol and other psychoactive substances, non-use of motorcycle helmets, seatbelts and child restraints and distracted driving are the four major causes of road crashes and fatalities. As per the World Health Organisation, driving under the influence of alcohol and any psychoactive substances increases the risk of a crash that results in death or serious injuries.

In the case of drunk driving, the risk of a road traffic crash starts at low levels of blood alcohol concentration

While 2,376 persons died in road crashes due to drunk driving in 2019, the number reduced to 1,862 and 1,352 in 2020 and 2021, respectively. The toll in 2022 rose to 1,503. The road transport ministry is yet to publish data for 2023

(BAC) and increases significantly when the driver's BAC is ≥ 0.04 (grams of ethanol per deciliter) or g/dL. In the case of drug-driving, the risk of incurring a road traffic crash is increased to differing degrees depending on the psychoactive drug used, as per World Health Organisation.

As per United States Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA), as alcohol levels rise in a person's system, the negative effects on the central nervous system increase. "At a BAC of 0.08 grams of alcohol per deciliter (g/dL) of blood, crash risk increases exponentially," it says.

Bring health supplements under drug control watch, suggests panel

Durgesh Nandan Jha
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: In a major shift in policy to regulate manufacture and sale of health supplements in the country, an inter-ministerial committee has suggested that supplements claiming to cure or mitigate any specific disease should be considered a drug and, therefore, come under the purview of Central Drug Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO).

Currently, all such products come under the purview of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

(FSSAI). The committee, headed by former health secretary Apurva Chandra, has suggested they should be brought under the purview of CDSCO. This would mean more scrutiny of such products before licensing and increased penalty on making false claims about disease risk reduction.

Main reason why many companies transfer some products from medicine or drug category to dietary supplements category is to escape price regulation. National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) regulates pricing of drugs and

ensures availability of medicines at affordable prices.

While NPPA has the authority to monitor and fix prices of drugs, it cannot take any action if the same drug is re-launched as a food supplement. The recommendation to categorise many health supplements as drugs will, therefore, have an impact on pricing of these products as well, officials said.

Other steps suggested include a separate provision of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), establishing a dedicated cell for monitoring of advertisements for such products.

Nehu VC goes on leave amid ouster demand

Shillong: North Eastern Hill University (Nehu) vice-chancellor Prabha Shankar Shukla has proceeded on leave until Nov 29 amid protests by students and faculty members demanding his removal, reports **Manish Das**. The agitators have expressed opposition to the VC's appointments of registrar and assistant registrar, considering the selected individuals unsuitable for their respective positions. Citing "unavoidable circumstances", Shukla announced he would take leave from Nov 17. N Saha, the most senior academic at Nehu, has been given administrative responsibilities.

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL

SANDEEP ADHAWARY





THE WORST OF TIMES...
BUT ALSO, THE BEST

We live amidst paradoxes. On the one hand, we are all of us, gentle reader at war with our home. As we add layer upon layer of needs and greeds on our existence, we tear a few more strips off Earth's skin or land an extra punch on its firmament. The more fossil fuelled electricity we use, the more we drive or fly thus, the more meat we eat, land we burn and plastic we discard, the more Earth suffers. Our fossil fuel emissions the ongoing COP28 climate summit estimates global carbon dioxide emissions reached 41.6 billion metric tons in 2024 — from activities both essential and escapist are wrapping Earth in a deadly haze. This traps heat, raising Earth's temperature — the World Meteorological Organisation finds global temperature 1.54°C above the pre-industrial average, 2024 heading to being the warmest year in history. This is literally making Earth melt — Antarctic sea ice is at its second-lowest level while oceans have risen by 111 mm from 1993 to 2024, this rate doubling in 31 years. Along side, temperature rise is spurring extreme weather events — 2024 has seen apocalyptic rain flooding Delhi to Valencia, deadly wildfires blazing across South America and hurricanes hitting North Carolina.

It doesn't seem an exaggeration to think humanity has wounded Earth indubitably. Yet, we also stand before the best of times. Most importantly, many of us now know the links between fossil fuels and choking pollution, species destruction and fatal warming. This was not privy to the public earlier — just some years ago, entrenched interests were hushing up climate science at educational institutions. Today, nations know more of the data explaining our existence — and many are prepared to make amends with Earth. While India's total renewable energy installed capacity increased by an impressive 13.5% in 2024, the International Energy Agency estimates green energy in power, heat and transport worldwide will rise by 60%, renewables in final energy consumption going from 13% to 20% by 2030. The transition is still painfully slow — UNEP stresses emissions must fall 42% by 2030. However, at least we now know it's essential.

Efforts in this direction will meet obstacles — but they will not remain unchallenged. As Times Evoke's global experts emphasise, more people learning the history and potential future — of a world swathed in perilous power means more demand for alternatives. Fortunately, we live in an age of invention where satellites to AI can help in exploring our relationship with Earth and its sicknesses and health, scarcity and plenty, war and peace, and its ability for happiness to vanquish despair. This also evokes, dear reader, the story of your life.

'From silver to slavery, the planetary crisis comes from the human capacity to desire — and harm'

Sunil Amrith is the Renu and Anand Dhawan Professor of History at Yale University. Speaking to Srijana Mitra Das at Times Evoke, he discusses his book 'The Burning Earth' and archives planetary hurt:

What is the core argument — and hope — in 'The Burning Earth'?

■ The hope is making the case that environmental justice is urgent and we must reckon with the multiple stories that have brought us to this point. The United Nations calls this a 'triple planetary crisis' — we are not only in a climate crisis but also biodiversity and health.

To know how we got here, we need to put together two stories. One is a very long term one, a struggle for human freedom in the most elemental sense — this is the freedom to live, to have enough beyond bare survival, to be able to imagine a future. All that demanded some environmental control. But there is also a very different story of the wanton, irreversible environmental destruction seen over the last few hundred years — that is driven by 'freedom' becoming domination. The planetary crisis is the cumulative outcome of all our desires and ambitions, with the vastly disproportionate effect a minority had in pushing the most environmental harms.

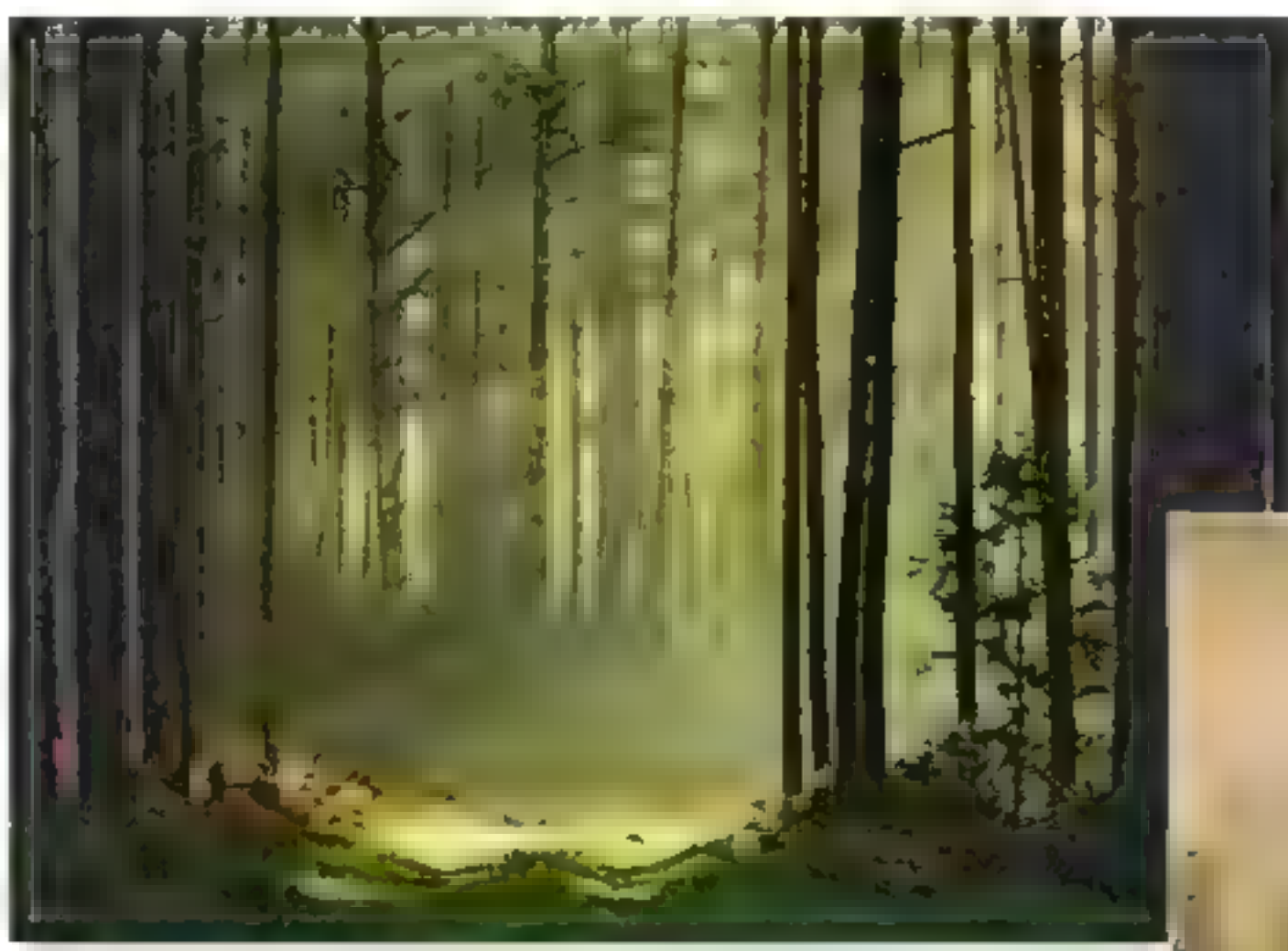
Why did the second idea spread unequally? Why didn't India or China, for instance, conduct global exploration and then, exploitation like European societies?

■ One of the fundamental conditions



IRON MEN? Migrants labouring for ore

for that worldview to develop is to see nature and other people as something to be conquered. This also involves a capacity to destroy — the ability to cause harm is at its centre. The gulf that opens between different societies, in their ability to inflict destruction on other people, animals and nature, is what emboldens the sense that anything is possible. The portable firearm plays a pivotal role here — these were fundamental over the last 500 years in



THE BURNING EARTH: Earth is over 4.5 billion years old — humans are just 7 million years old, younger than mushrooms, trees and snails, but the planet's youngest species have changed its physiology

situations where the capacity of Europeans to inflict destruction was greater than those of the societies they sought to conquer

Why is growing rice in China centuries ago an important point here?

■ It's a remarkable story — one strain of rice from central Vietnam called 'champa' revolutionised the possibility of sustaining human communities. Champa rice is very fast-ripening and through the intervention of the Chinese emperor in the 11th century CE, around 1,000 years ago, it spread through southern China. It transformed China's demography — for the first time, the bulk of the Chinese population lived in the south, not the north. This literally changed the world because it allowed huge economic flourishing, making China the very heart of the global economy. It was for access to Chinese markets that the Europeans embarked on all their adventures.

Did other commodities also become pivotal in Earth's transformation?

■ I emphasise sugar — arguably, no crop has done more harm to the environment or human welfare. Sugar brought many transformations, including the plantation, a distinctive kind of agriculture all about maxim-

ising one particular crop's yield as quickly as possible, regardless of the consequences — what allowed this was unfree labour. So, even before enslaved African labour, on the island of Madeira in the Atlantic, which they burned to make plantations, the Portuguese began using local enslaved labour. Alongside, there were silver and gold mining. I write about silver mining in Porto Si which generated a significant amount of all the silver in the world — at inhuman cost to labourers. This is when mercury started being used in extracting silver and there's archaeological evidence of how devastating this was to workers. It also left a wasteland on the landscape — and it began the global economy because a third of this silver ended up in China, shipped on galleons from Acapulco to Manila from the 16th to the 19th century. This is what the Europeans used to get into Chinese markets. Eventually, they didn't want

WORLDWIDE WEB



● Revered in ancient Egypt, ibises have slender, down-curved bills. They hail back 60 million years but today, the giant ibis is critically endangered while others face habitat destruction for farms, rubber and cassava plantations, insecticides and hunters — the scarlet ibis is hunted for its plumage, despite being Trinidad's national bird

to sell silver anymore so, they started using Indian opium to access China

How does the idea of human freedom evolve as nature's exploitation thus grew?

■ Both are twinned processes — you see them coming together with the first Iberian conquests in the Americas. The language used to describe the indigenous people slaughtered there was that they were 'not fully human'. There is a dehumanisation of some, which further

emboldens the idea that white Christian European men have transcended their animal origins — and now, they sit above it all. That pattern is repeated in other places — the most intensive environmental harm goes with the greatest human exploitation

A book by Gabrielle Hecht on South Africa says you can see apartheid from space. South Africa's gold mining industry, exploiting migrant African labour, began in the 19th century. Those mine dumps are still visible around Johannesburg — you can see the seam of the gold mine of the Witwatersrand from space. It has completely shaped that city and the toxicity of its groundwater into which mine waste still leaches 140 years later

You link ecocide with genocide — can you elaborate?

■ The term 'ecocide' first came into use in 1970. A Yale University plant biologist, Arthur Galston, coined it, commenting on the US military in Vietnam. America was using Agent Orange, with devastating impacts on human health and the environment, twinning genocide with environmental

IT'S OUR WORLD TOO: Humans treat our co-species mostly as beasts of burden

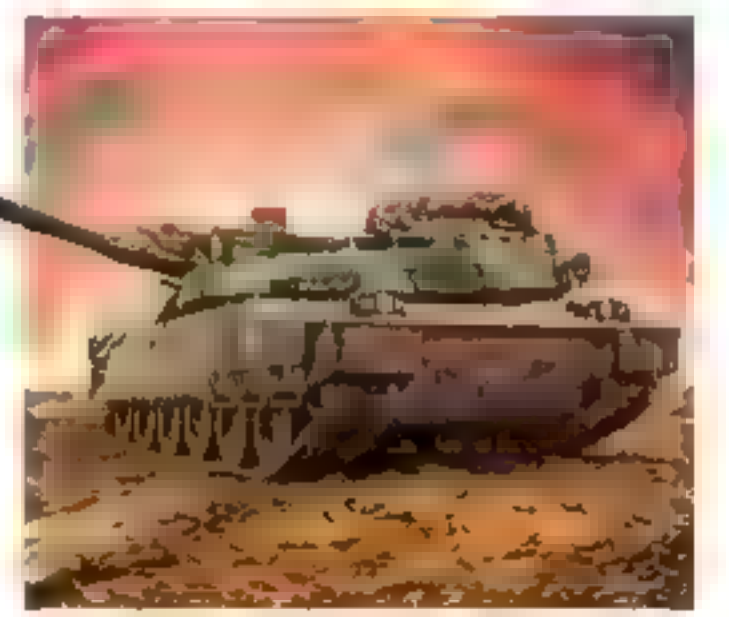
destruction. We can see many iterations in the 20th century like the Brazilian state's persecution of indigenous people accompanying mass deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.

Why is war discussed so little as a shaper of our environment?

■ War has an outside impact in making this planetary crisis. Consider the two World Wars — first, they brought home the sheer power and capacity of human beings to cause destruction. Second, they fundamentally altered the human imagination — when World War I began, David Lloyd George, then British Minister for Munitions, likened it to a natural disaster, using metaphors like an earthquake or cyclone. Then, it seemed like only the power of nature could describe such destruction — by the end of the war, that had completely changed. The Norwegian meteorologist Vilhelm Bjerknes made a breakthrough discovery in climate science of 'Polar fronts' — a metaphor he drew directly from the trenches of war. It's as if, after WWI, only the metaphors of human armies could help us understand natural forces. The wars caused a fundamental imaginative transformation of how much power humans could wield

What role do non-human animals play in this history?

■ Until the 20th century, animals were pivotal to human capacities to do any thing. I write of how one in four horses in the world were in the Mongol army without them, the Mongols couldn't have created one of the largest con-



BIG BANG: The arms industry hurts Earth

tiguous empires ever. Animals remain central to the human capacity to produce food — yet, that's accompanied by a story starting in the 18th century of mass destructions. Bison in North America went from 40 million to extinction in a few decades. It's now estimated we humans kill more than a billion animals a year — our dependence on animals goes together with a level of violence and destruction to which we have become totally desensitised



HOW MUCH TIME DO WE HAVE?

● Sturgeons are among Earth's most ancient — they are peers of dinosaurs — and endangered species. 85% sturgeons face extinction due to declines in their natural habitat, rivers they migrate across being dammed, and overfishing as humans seek more and more caviar from sturgeon roe. If connoisseurs could skip this, sturgeons might even live their natural 100 years



● Antelope are graceful runners — yet, they can't outrun humans. 'Fashionable' people seek the Tibetan antelope's wool to flaunt in 'shatoosh' shawls while Saigas went from one million in the 1990s to 1,20,000, facing habitat loss and hunters. 25% of antelope species face extinction — think of that when you next hear of blackbucks

Research: KUCH, Smithsonian Magazine, BBC, WWF, Encyclopaedia Britannica

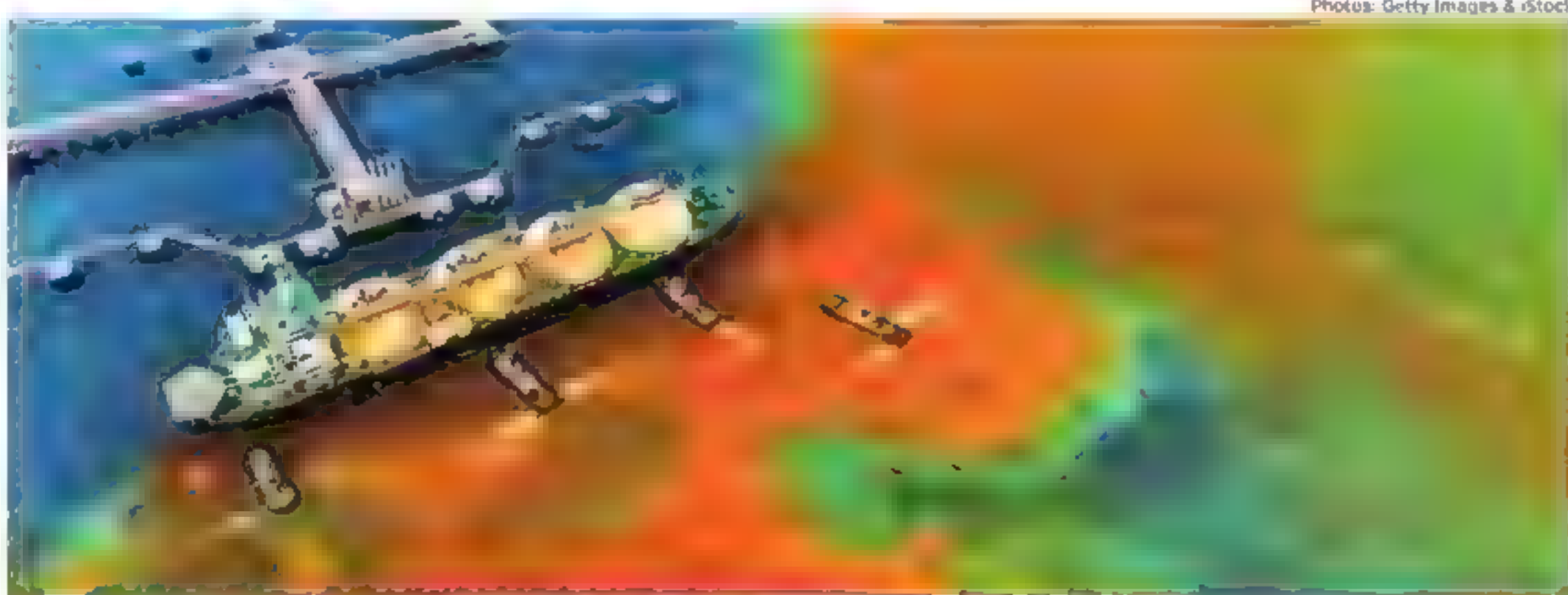


'Humans seek cobalt and gold from the oceans — but climate change is a false reason for seabed mining'

Lisa A. Levin is Distinguished Professor of Biological Oceanography and Marine Ecology at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the University of California, San Diego. Speaking from COP29 at Baku to Srijana Mitra Das at TE, she explains the risks posed to the deep blue sea:

Lisa Levin is sitting in the middle of a thick throng of scientists, policy makers, leaders and activists in a COP29 hall at Baku, Azerbaijan. Despite the crowds milling about, you can discern both Levin's expertise in her field — and her empathy for it. She says, 'I'm a benthic ecologist, a scientist of the depths. I study animal lives, communities and ecosystems on the sea floor. I'm also an oceanographer — my research has extended from intertidal and coastal waters to the deep ocean. I study ecosystems that occur along our long continental margins and deep waters — one of those is oxygen minimum zones which are natural but are now expanding due to climate change.'

Levin's face takes on a wry expression when she mentions human-induced global warming. 'The other involves methane seepage. Chemo-sensitive communities develop where methane seeps from the sea floor — this is also being affected by climate change.' The impacts of global warming, from storms to droughts, are evident on terrestrial Earth. But what is happening in our planet's deep waters? Levin explains, 'The deep-sea isn't well-explored. We know 5% of the ecosystems that live there. To determine what their responses to global warming could be, we use natural gradients that occur, for instance, in oxygen or carbon dioxide. We know this will raise the temperature of the deep-sea floor, which is mostly cold. Animals there have narrow thermal tolerances — they only survive well in a small range of temperatures. When the



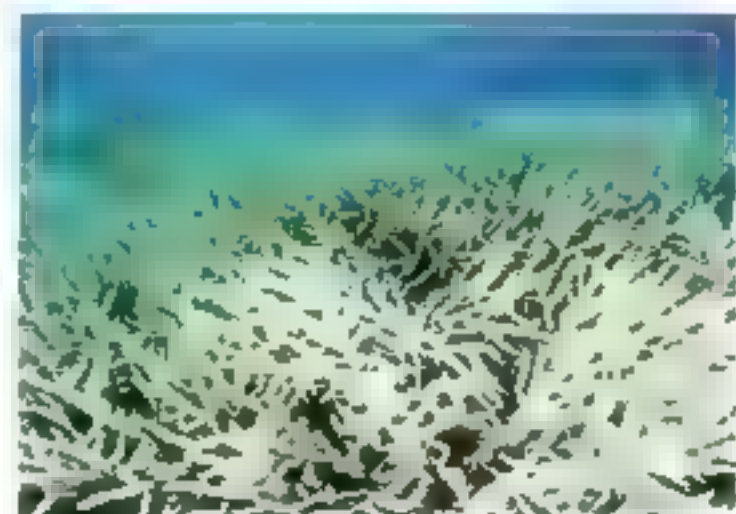
DRILL, DRILL, DRILL? Marine drilling for oil and gas produces seismic and noise disturbances as a matter of course — but it can also lead to fuels leaching into the seas, fouling these for those whose natural home these waters are and wrecking key ecosystems

water warms, the animals try to move to colder water — so, they could travel deeper or change their latitude. Hence, a redistribution of species is expected. Many island nations rely on certain fish, like tuna, as a major source of income — if those move away, they will lose this earning.'

As the crowd bustles about, Levin continues, 'Warming can also release frozen methane from below the sea surface. It changes the solubility of gas in the ocean — as a result, the ocean loses oxygen or deoxygenates. Warming also makes waters more stratified — vertical mixing is less likely. This means the interior of the ocean loses oxygen because while it is consumed by microbes and animals, it's not as easily replaced when the waters are more stratified. Both these phenomena are causing a loss of oxygen in the global seas. So far, in the post industrial era, we've lost 2% of this,' Levin emphasises, 'But this is not evenly distributed and some areas have lost 30% to 40%.' What happens in the ocean doesn't just stay there — Levin adds ocean warming greatly impacts climate on land.

Climate change, of course, is unfurling as we speak but there are other immediate threats the deep-sea faces. Levin has written of the ocean as 'the last great wilderness' on Earth but she now emphasises just how

much peril confronts these hitherto undisturbed expanses. 'Right now, the deep-sea is relatively pristine except along our continental margins — there is a lot of bottom fishing, trawling and longlining there. There is great damage already from that — this destroys the sea floor and wrecks any three-dimensional structures made by animals. Lost fishing gear traps animals — that is 'ghost fishing' and there's bycatch. There is a huge amount of debris underwater too — every time I dive, I see cans, plastic bags, bottles, shoes, so many things. These pollutants add to the contamination from land, including chemicals and microplastics dumped into our rivers, winding into the deep-sea.'



AFTER: 77% of coral reefs are now bleached

Industrial activities centred in these waters also pose hazards. Levin comments, 'Oil and gas drilling in deep water have been done for decades now. In many places, this is being phased out as fossil fuels are reduced but in others, especially developing countries, this is just beginning as oil companies are planning new activities there. The regular effects of such drilling include noise and seismic impacts which can be very damaging to marine mammals. However, when there is a blow-out of the rig, as happened in the Deepwater Horizon off the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, the effects are devastating,' Levin says with a firmness both wry and sad. 'The oil spilled is very toxic to marine life — but so are the dispersants and chemicals used for cleaning up.'

Yet, these perils don't deter more humans from eyeing these waters. Marine mining is now proposed, literally, as a silver bullet to several ends. Levin outlines, 'People are seeking to mine ocean nodules and plains for cobalt, nickel and copper; hydrothermal vents for gold and silver; manganese crust on sea mounds for cobalt and nickel and in coastal waters, phosphate mining is sought for fertiliser. All these in-

volve very destructive practices that will wreck life on the sea floor — they will release sediment plumes and toxins and produce noise, light and vibration disturbing to marine organisms.'

A ferocious irony underpins proposed deep-sea mining. Levin explains, 'Climate change is being proposed as the motivation for this — these materials go into electric car batteries too and it's said electrification of the transport system might require them. However, that's a false claim — battery technology is changing from cobalt and nickel, and there are enough supplies on land to provide in the short term. There is also better recycling and reuse of existing metals, so we don't need to mine so much. Climate change is a false justification for seabed mining,' Levin emphasises.

She then explains her current endeavour. 'At COP29, I'm talking about the deep ocean and its role in climate regulation as well as the importance of biodiversity and its connection to climate. We've just had a session on balancing deep ocean biodiversity, carbon cycling, resource extraction and resilience. Some climate mitigation activities proposed are actually damaging to biodiversity in a way that could affect the services species provide for climate regulation. People often treat climate and biodiversity as separate issues — but these are very closely connected, especially in the ocean.'

When asked about her research on invertebrate life histories in the seas, the scientist's eyes soften and she laughs very gently. She says, 'I used to work a lot on this, especially larvae and their development and resulting population structures. Invertebrates are wonderful — they have many ways of surviving and reproducing. Their stories tell us about the connectivity of marine populations — and their resilience.'

This strength has been tested so far only by nature. As the human desire to reshape the oceans grows, scientists like Levin are determined to convey what a huge threat that poses and how much extraordinary life under water could be destroyed.

READERS WRITE

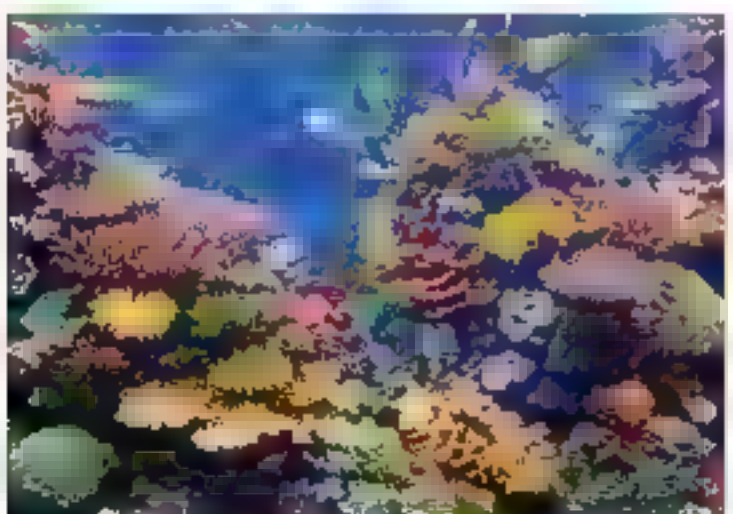
Dear Times Evoke,
TE continues to impress us, providing insightful perspectives and thought-provoking analyses. The interview with Kristine C. Harper (9th November) on climate manipulation was another intriguing read. Aside from the environmental consequences of tampering with the climate, at a time of geopolitical tensions, even well-intentioned weather manipulation might be viewed as hostile. An engaging TE article!
— Dr Dipankar Guha, Delhi

I wait eagerly to read the beautiful TE every weekend and I was enthralled to learn how the US government could literally 'make it rain'. Kristine Harper discussed human innovation. But she also expressed doubts about how far such tinkering with nature should go. Ideas of reflecting the sun's rays back are alarming. Thank you, TE, for always giving us food for thought.
— Poornima Vij, Bengaluru

TE keeps me engaged with its articles which have lots of information and untold facts, presented in a straightforward way. I enjoyed reading Kristine Harper who succinctly explained events leading to climatic changes today. I was astonished to read about Irving Langmuir, the Nobel Laureate chemist, making artificial rain. Thanks for this wonderful article, TE!
— Sekar Sairam, Aladu

Every Saturday morning, TE comes to me as a treat. This time too, Kristine C. Harper's interview was superb. From WWII and beyond, Harper flawlessly explained the evolution of different scientific researches, including producing rain in labs, thus creating 'designer weather'. Thank you, TE, for such knowledgeable and beautifully presented articles.
— MK Goel, Delhi

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BEFORE: Coral reefs boost oxygen and life



EVA LONGORIA REVEALS SHE HAS MOVED OUT OF 'DYSTOPIAN' AMERICA, SAYS TRUMP IS GOING TO MAKE US A SCARY PLACE

BRAD PITT & ANGELINA JOLIE'S BATTLE OVER \$500M-WORTH WINERY HEADS TO COURT, TRIAL COULD LAST UNTIL 2026

RFK Jr Is Trump's Pick For Health Boss

Could Head A Dept With Oversight Of Agencies He Has Been At War With & Which Have Debunked His Claims

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: MAGA supreme and President-elect Donald Trump continued to torch established norms as he picked Robert F Kennedy Jr, an anti-vaccine conspiracy theorist, to head the health portfolio, and demanded his term in office start from Nov 5, the day he won the election, instead of the constitutionally mandated Jan 20.

Kennedy's assignment to the department of health and human services (HHS) was widely expected considering Trump had urged him to "go wild" on the health front even before he was elected. But it still sent a jolt through the traditional establishment considering Kennedy's outlier stand on many issues relating to public health. Among them, his theory that vaccines cause autism, his campaign to remove fluoride from water supply which experts say had beneficial effects; his canvassing for raw milk, and dodgy Covid therapies, including promoting hydroxychloroquine, which the FDA said is ineffective in treating Covid-19.

However, his campaign against America's junk food fetish is widely appreciated—even by Donald Trump, who is himself a burger king sworn to colas. "For too long, Americans have been crushed by the industrial food complex and drug companies who have engaged in deception, misinformation, and

THE CONSPIRACY MAN

► Robert F Kennedy Jr said in a podcast interview in July that 'there's no vaccine that is safe and effective' and told FOX News that he still believes in the long-ago debunked idea that vaccines can cause autism

► 'I see somebody on a hiking trail carrying a little baby and I say to him, 'Better not get them vaccinated', Kennedy said in 2021, adding that he advises people to 'resist' CDC guidelines

► He has accused Anthony Fauci and Bill Gates in his 2021 book, 'The Real Anthony Fauci', of exaggerating the pandemic to promote vaccines

► In 2021, he promoted

the disproven conspiracy that 5G cellular networks allow govts to 'control' their behaviour

► In recent past, he has claimed that 'WiFi radiation' causes cancer, 'cellphone tumours' and 'opens your blood brain barrier' to toxins

► He has also questioned whether 'phony' HIV causes AIDS and suggested antidepressants lead to school shootings

► In early Nov, he said he would recommend fluoride be removed from public water supplies, falsely claiming on X that the chemical is associated with bone fractures and cancer

d.s.information when it comes to public health... HHS will play a big role in helping ensure that everybody will be protected from harmful chemicals, pollutants, pesticides, pharmaceutical products, and food additives that have contributed to the overwhelming health crisis in this Country," Trump said in a statement, adding that Kennedy "will restore the traditions

of gold standard scientific research, and beacons of Transparency, to end the chronic disease epidemic" in America

In effect, Kennedy will be heading a department with a \$2 trillion budget and 80,000 employees, with oversight of the very agencies (FDA, CDC, NIH etc) which he has been at war against and which have debunked many of his claims. He will

also be fighting the unhealthy junk food habits of the very voters who put Trump in office: MAGA Republicans win most of the unhealthiest, least-educated, poorest states in America, with some of the worst health metrics, including obesity. Like most of Trump's nominees, Kennedy too appears to have some skeletons in the closet—in his case literally a bear carcass he dumped in NYC's Central Park after initially intending to skin it for meat; and another time sawing off the head of a beached whale and driving home with it strapped to his car roof. Typical of the Kennedy family (he is the nephew of President John F Kennedy and son of his brother Robert F Kennedy), RFK Jr has other spotty scandals and controversies on his resume.

But Trump is attempting a Hail Mary for his dodgy nominees by indicating he intends to skip FBI background checks (because of his deep distrust of the institution) and bypass senate confirmation hearings, the two wire-trippers for questionable nominees. So off the charts are Trump's nominees that liberal political junkies and language mavens are proffering a rarely used term to describe his administration: in the making: kakistocracy, which describes a govt led by the least suitable or competent citizens of a state.

Liberal and moderate commentators can't seem to decide

which is Trump's worst nomination. "Any one of the last three of Trump's cabinet-level picks (Tulsi Gabbard as DNI, Matt Gaetz as AG, RFK Jr for HHS), standing alone, would arguably have been the worst in American history. The fact that Trump made all three in a span of roughly 24 hours is astonishing. Congratulations, Mr President Elect and everyone who voted for him—on this kakistocratic hat trick," anti-Trump Republican George Conway wrote on X.

The purported kakistocracy would normally have had to pass the smell test of gerontocracy in the US Senate (whose median age is around 66 years). But GOP Senate grandees are being intimidated by younger MAGA Republicans in the House of Representatives (median age 56) with warnings that they will be defeated in upcoming elections if they resist Trump nominees. A third of the 100-member Senate will go to the polls in mid-term elections in 2025. So much in thrall are MAGA Republicans of Trump that one congressman touched new heights of sycophancy in America. He's got a mission and his goals and objectives. Whatever that is, we need to embrace it. All of it. Every single word. If Donald Trump says jump three feet high and scratch your head, we all jump three feet high and scratch our heads and that's it," Troy Nehls, from Texas, said.

US correspondent for TOI

No. of Indians going to UK univs fell 20% between '22-'23 & '23-'24: Report

Poor Job Prospects, Riots Blamed For Putting Off Students

Naomi Canton

London: The number of Indian students going to study at British universities has fallen by 20% amid a worrying drop in international students generally, which is posing a grave risk to the financial stability of the sector. The education sector relies heavily on the higher fees paid by international students. The recent UK riots and poor job prospects are among the reasons seen as responsible for the fall in Indian students.

The Office for Students, the regulator of UK higher education, published a report on Friday which showed that students from India have seen the largest decrease, with Indian students falling from 139,914 in 2022-23 to 111,329 in 2023-24, a fall of 28.385 (20.1%).

Nigerian students are down 25,897 (44.6%) to 32,192, and students from Bangladesh are down 5,202 (41.2%) to 7,425. There has been an 11.8% decline in the total number of "Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies" granted to international students between 2023 and 2024 compared to the previous year.



There were 16% fewer visa applications from international students between Jan 2024 and Sep 2024 compared to 2023. Increased employer national insurance contributions in the recent budget and below forecast recruitment of UK undergraduates are also creating a hole in university finances. The report estimates that by 2025-26 the annual income for UK universities will be down by £3.4 billion and the sector will see a deficit of £1.6 billion, resulting in 72% of universities facing a deficit and 40% having low liquidity. This is likely to lead to course and university closures, with those focused on postgraduate taught courses relying on international students being "of particular concern", it said.

Declining interest from India was due to master's students not being allowed to bring partners, the economic conditions in the UK, and recent rioting stories, said Amit Tiwari, president of the Indian National Students Association UK.

Indian students are looking at Germany, Ireland, the US, and the Middle East instead, said Sanam Arora, founder and chair of National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK. She blamed the "Conservative party ban on dependents' confusion around the post-study work visa, an increase in skilled worker salary thresholds and an apparent lack of jobs in the UK." "For the first time, safety is also being raised as a concern," she said.

Musk met Iran's UN ambassador to discuss ways to defuse tensions with US, say Tehran officials

Farnaz Fassihi

Elon Musk, a close adviser to President-elect Donald Trump, met with Iran's ambassador to the UN on Monday in New York in a session that two Iranian officials described as a discussion of how to defuse tensions between Iran and the US.

The Iranians said the meeting between Musk and ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani lasted more than an hour and was held at a secret location. The Iranians, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, described the meeting as "positive". Asked about whether there was such a session, Trump's communications director said, "We do not comment on reports of private meetings that did or did not occur."

DOGE is hiring: 'Need revolutionaries with super high-IQ willing to work 80+ hrs a wk. Pay is zero'

On Thursday, the newly-minted Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) offered something of a brushback pitch to those who saw it as just a pium garden-leave appointment common in the tech industry. "We don't need more part-time idea generators," the group wrote on X. "We need super high-IQ small-govt revolutionaries willing to work 80+ hours per week on unglamorous cost-cutting. If that's you, DM this account with your CV. Elon (Musk) & Vivek (Ramdaswamy) will review the top 1% of applicants." In a reply to an interested candidate, Musk suggested the staff would be working for free. "This will be tedious work, make lost of enemies & compensation is zero. What a great deal!" the world's richest man wrote.

cur." Musk did not respond.

Musk has emerged as the most powerful private citizen in the Trump transition, and has sat in on nearly every job interview. During a call last week with Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, the president-elect handed the phone to the billionaire. Musk has played a key role in providing commu-

nications capability to Ukraine in the war with Russia.

An early direct meeting between a senior Iranian official and Musk raises the possibility of a change in tone between Tehran and Washington under the Trump administration, despite a charged history between the president-elect and Iran. One of the Iranian officials said

that it was Musk who had requested the meeting and that the ambassador picked the site.

During his first term Trump pulled the US out of the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and world powers and imposed tough economic sanctions on Iranian oil revenues and international banking transactions. He also ordered the assassination of a top Iranian general, Qassem Soleimani, in Iraq in 2020. In response, Iran's supreme leader banned any negotiations with the Trump govt and Iranian officials vowed to avenge Soleimani's killing. Federal prosecutors said in a court filing last week that Iran had plotted to assassinate Trump before the election. But in the wake of Trump's election last week, Iran has been openly debating whether it can now reach a new and more lasting deal with the US.

Lara Trump could fill Rubio's Senate seat

Senator Rick Scott, the Florida Republican, threw his support behind Lara Trump, the president-elect's daughter in law, to replace his colleague Senator Marco Rubio. "Lara Trump would be a GREAT Senator and represent Floridians well," Scott wrote on social media on Thursday. Trump tapped Rubio on Wednesday to serve as his secretary of state, and, if confirmed, Rubio will have to step down from his Senate seat. Gov. Ron DeSantis, Republican of Florida has the power to appoint a replacement for Rubio until 2026. Lara Trump, the co-chair of the Republican National Committee, said in an interview on Fox Business she had received support from other GOP lawmakers. "If this were something that I'm asked to do, I would seriously consider it," she

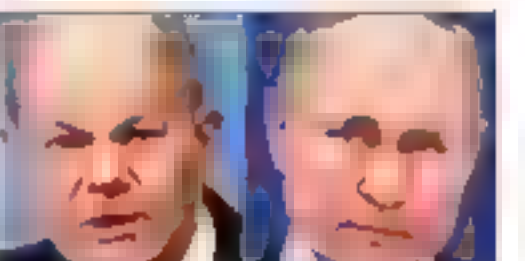


down from his Senate seat. Gov. Ron DeSantis, Republican of Florida has the power to appoint a replacement for Rubio until 2026. Lara Trump, the co-chair of the Republican National Committee, said in an interview on Fox Business she had received support from other GOP lawmakers. "If this were something that I'm asked to do, I would seriously consider it," she

Putin talks with Scholz, breaking ice with West

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and President Vladimir Putin of Russia spoke by phone for an hour on Friday, in a discussion that German authorities said centered on prospects for bringing an end to the war in Ukraine. It appears to have been the first call between Putin and a sitting leader of a large Western country since late 2022. The Kremlin confirmed the conversation and said Scholz initiated the call.

Scholz told Putin he believes that the deployment of North Korean troops to assist Russia in its war with Ukraine amounts to a serious escalation of the conflict, according to the German government's summary of the call. Scholz called on Putin to end the war, contending that Russia had not achieved any of its goals more than 1,090 days since its invasion, the summary said. Scholz condemned Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure and told Putin Germany would continue to assist Ukraine



Ukrainian President Zelensky said Scholz's (L) call opened 'Pandora's box' by undermining efforts to isolate the Russian prez. "Now there may be other conversations, other calls. Just a lot of words. And this is exactly what Putin (R) has long wanted: it is extremely important for him to weaken his isolation

According to Russian state media, Putin told his German counterpart that any peace deal in Ukraine must be based on "new territorial realities and, most importantly, address the root causes of the conflict." Putin has repeatedly said Russia will not hand over Ukrainian territory it has captured and will demand guarantees of Ukrainian neutrality in any peace talks.

Scholz spoke with President Zelensky of Ukraine before the call with Putin.

Zelensky says war will 'end sooner' under Trump admin

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia's war against his country will "end sooner" under US President-elect Donald Trump's administration. "The war will end, but there is no exact date. Of course, with the policy of this team, which will now lead the White House, the war will end sooner," he told UK



rain's Suspense broadcaster. Trump has said he'd seek a quick deal between Kyiv and Moscow. German Chancellor Scholz said in an interview published Friday that Trump privately held "more nuanced position on Ukraine than is often assumed". Scholz, who spoke with Trump by phone on Sunday, told the German Sueddeutsche Zeitung daily his call was "a very detailed and good conversation" about the situation in Ukraine. Asked whether Trump would make a deal over the head of the Ukrainians, Scholz said Trump gave "no indication" he would.

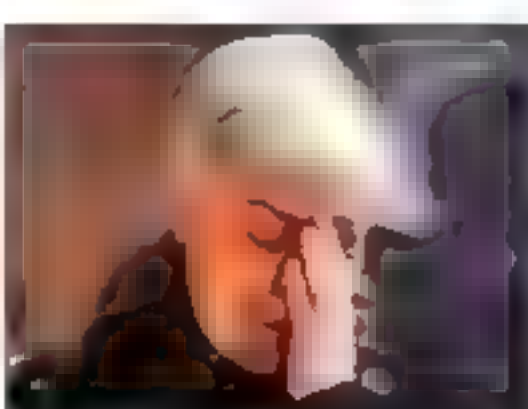
In echo of Soviet era, more Russians denounce each other over Ukraine

London: On the last day of Jan, a woman took her son to see paediatrician Nadezhda Buyanova at Polyclinic No. 140 in northwest Moscow. The boy, aged 7, had a problem with one of his eyes. The conversation that the boy's mother alleged took place during an 18-minute encounter at the clinic would change both women's lives and land the 68-year-old doctor in prison.

The case harked on a denunciation — part of a rising trend of Russians informing on fellow citizens for their views on the war in Ukraine and other alleged political crimes. Critics say the wave of denunciations

is helping President Putin's govt crack down on dissent. In a video recorded as she was wailing away from the clinic, the mother, Anastasia Akinshina, said she had told the doctor the boy was traumatised because his father was killed fighting for Russia in the war in Ukraine. "Do you know what she told me? 'Well, my dear, what do you expect? Your husband was a legitimate target of Ukraine', she said, mimicking the doctor's voice and intonation. Fighting back tears, Akinshina said she had raised the incident with the hospital administration and suspected they

planned to hush it up. "So the question is, where can I complain about this b****h now so she'll be kicked out of the fucking country or sent to the devil in jail?" she said in the clip, which went viral on social media. At the trial, Buyanova denied making the comment. But despite a lack of further adult witnesses, the denunciation was sufficient to destroy her 40-year medical career and her life. The doctor, who had been in pre-trial detention since April, appeared before a Moscow court on Tuesday, her grey hair closely cropped. She was found guilty under a wartime cen-



A 68-year-old doctor was convicted Tuesday and sentenced to 5 yrs in jail on accusations that she said during a medical appointment of a boy that his father, who was killed while fighting in Ukraine, deserved to die

sorship law of "publicly spreading deliberately false information" about the armed forces

Nasa says Sunita Williams in 'incredible health' on ISS, denies 'losing weight' talk

Kenneth Chang



A photo that Nasa released in late Sept showed Williams making pizza on the ISS. Sunita's face appeared 'sunken and thin' in the photo, sparking rumours

there in June. While taking pains to insist that Williams and Butch Wilmore, the other astronaut, were not stranded, Nasa decided that Starliner would return to Earth empty and that Williams and Wilmore would join the space station crew until February. They are to head home on a SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft instead.

A photograph that Nasa released in late September showed Williams and Wilmore

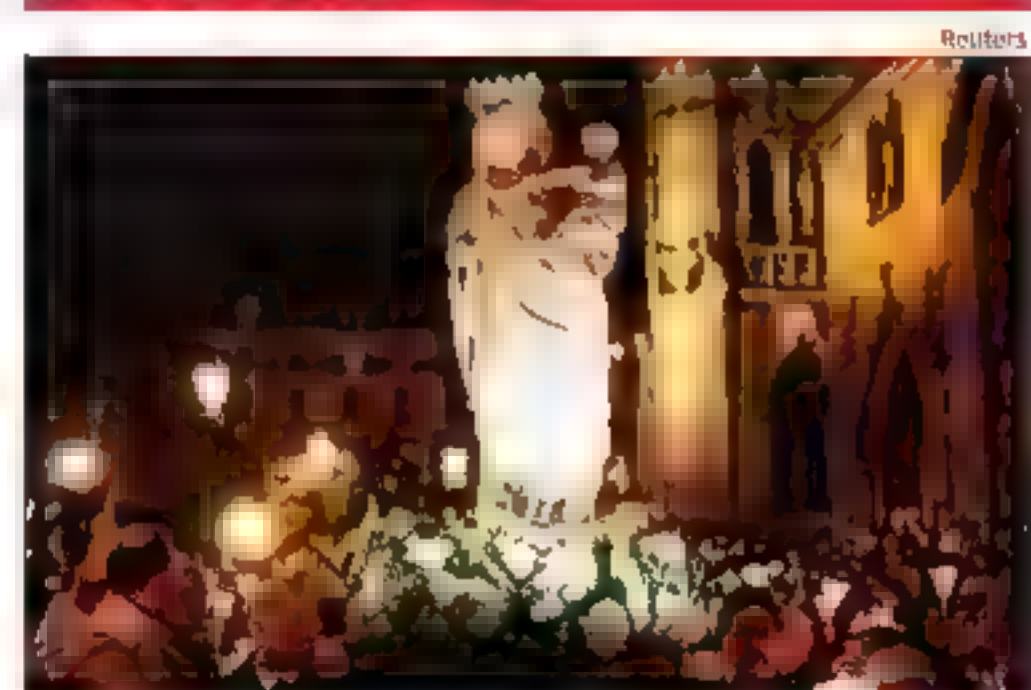
making pizza on the space station. Williams' face appeared sunken and thin. An article in New York Post last week fueled speculation, quoting an anonymous Nasa employee who claimed she had lost significant body mass.

The Post article said that Williams had been unable to consume enough calories to maintain her mass — the rigors of life in space include exercising a couple of hours a day to help maintain the astronauts' bones — and that Nasa doctors had spent a month working with her to regain mass. In an interview Dr James D Polk, the chief health and medical officer for the space agency, said that was not true.

I've known Sunita 20 years, and I'll tell you, Sunita looks the same to me," he said. "She's in incredible health right now."

Polk said all the American astronauts on the space station were doing well. During her video appearance Tuesday, and another Thursday, Williams did not appear emaciated.

DAILY PLANET



BACK HOME: A procession of hundreds of people holding candles walked through the streets of Paris to bring a famed statue of the Virgin Mary and child back to Notre-Dame Cathedral on Friday, five years after it was moved to a nearby church after a devastating fire

Zuck raps song for wife Priscilla on meet-cute anniv



To the windows," croons Mark Zuckerberg, the billionaire CEO of Meta, "to the walls." On Wednesday, he celebrated the anniversary of meeting his wife, Priscilla Chan, by releasing a version of the Lil Jon & the East Side Boyz song "Get Low", which he had rewritten and performed with singer T-Pain. In an Instagram post, Zuckerberg wrote, "Get Low" was playing when I first met Priscilla at a college party, so every year we listen to it on our dating anniversary", along with a photo of himself and Chan in their younger years. The post also included a photo of lyrics and an album cover in which T-Pain and Zuckerberg are both holding up acoustic

guitars. Chan replied: "Can't get quite as slow anymore but more in love and grateful for that love than ever. Love you MZ." The song is on Zuckerberg's surfing video and a statue he commissioned of his wife as some of the more outlandish moments of his recent past.

Human in bear suit used to defraud insurance cos

California has seen its share of bears breaking into cars. But bears caught on camera entering luxury cars tipped off insurers that something wasn't quite right. In what it has dubbed "Operation Bear Claw", the California insurance department said four LA residents were arrested for defrauding of nearly \$142,000 by claiming a bear had caused damage to their vehicles. The dept had a biologist review the claim videos, who concluded it was "clearly a human in a bear suit".

Yoko Ono rightful owner of Lennon's stolen watch: Court

A \$4.5m rare watch given to John Lennon by his wife Yoko Ono and which was stolen after his death doesn't belong to an Italian man who bought it from an auction house years later, a Swiss court ruled Thursday, paving way for its return to Ono.



CONTRAPUNTO

Socialists invent class, nationalists invent the nation, and so the populists invent 'the people'

- CAS MUDD

Don's Darlings

Voters want a shake-up, so long as he delivers

The lib commentariat, all shook by the breadth of the Trump win, didn't even get a chance to catch its breath, before his selections for key govt positions started coming in fast and furious, and had them gasping all over again. Some of these picks have a comfortable conventionality, such as Marco Rubio for Secretary of State. Many do not.

Tulsi Gabbard, his pick for Director of National Intelligence, says that resistance from "the swamp in Washington" is to be expected. How long the Trump govt will stay on the right side of this anti-establishment tilt will of course depend on how his eventual crew delivers on his promises. It will have to square several odd pledges too, such as raising tariffs and reducing inflation. But first, it can enjoy a honeymoon period, basking in phrases like America First and Dream Team, before these are put to the test. Afterwards, much will come down to whether they can keep an Arjun-like focus on reform targets. Don't get derailed into waging war against the critics. Many a popular mandate is done in by vindictive neuroses.

Meanwhile, the calling out of his candidates' qualifications loses half the crowd when it's prefaced by declaring Trump himself as unqualified for the job. He has won both the Electoral College and a popular vote convincingly drawn from across all the demographic categories. Insofar as his post-2020 candidacy has been even more disruptive than in 2016, the mandate he has got is for an even more Trumpian govt. He did pick more establishment candidates then, and how that played out would be influencing his decisions now, making 'loyalty' climb much higher on the CV meter.



BahuBullies

In India, daughters-in-law don't have rights, just 'duties'

Stopping a wife/daughter-in-law from visiting temples, watching TV, or forcing her to sleep on the ground aren't, legally, 'cruelty', held Bombay HC's Aurangabad bench in a dowry, abetment to suicide case, acquitting the dead woman's marital family. Judges have the latitude to read the law basis own values - and they're plucked from the very society they serve, so such a reading is unsurprising. For, the real cruelty is such attitudes to daughters-in-law remain routine.

Beti-beti welfarism of several decades ensured much progress in how far the 'daughter' has come. But it remains a scary road to 'daughter-in-law' status. Will the marital home be a safe space? Or hell? In the marital home, her "duties" are sharply defined, but her basic rights ambiguous - if anything, a source of conflict. Her well-being is at the mercy of in-laws' expectations. Suffice to note studies show the number of grandkids is decided on grandma's preference, where bahu is less educated than mom-in-law.

Popular culture without pause reiterates the daughter-in-law code of conduct: 'obedience' numero uno. Society celebrates 'bahus' juggling multiple roles till the last breath, but hey, not a choos of complaint - it is but her 'dharma' to serve us so. PM-EAC policy briefs on caregiving note "women are coming under extraordinary pressure due to...disproportionate burden of care...on their shoulders". touching all the right chords: invisible work, falling PLFS, etc. But policy works in silos. Survival of the family as society desires it rests 100% on controls over the daughter-in-law. Is it killing her? Of course it is. But apparently, that's alright - even for HC judges.



Losing Our Senses & Serendipity

Technology is dooming us to virtual unreality

Today, the line between the online and offline worlds is blurred, as phones and algorithms mediate more of our daily activities. Most of what passes for authentic experience is vicarious and virtual. The Extinction of Experience: Being Human in a Disembodied World by the philosopher Christine Rosen reminds us of the value of the physical reality we share.

It wasn't always this way. Direct experience is our first teacher. A fighter's scar, stretch marks from pregnancy, metaphors about a broken heart, or a nosy neighbour: these remind us that we experience things with our bodies. Face-to-face interaction is how we learn patience, and a sense of public space. It helps us conceptualise a shared reality.

But now, online communities tell us how the 'real world' works. Consensus reality seems insubstantial, as more of us distrust our actual experience and live in these mental cocoons. Increasingly, young people prefer virtual interactions. To minimise awkward human contact, airports rely on kiosks to check-in and salespersons are replaced by iPads.

We're meant to look at each other. Our intuition rests on the ability to read faces, physical signals, postures, micro-expressions. Encountering each other on screens, through texts and posts, deprives us of that ability. Children's first experience of play, music, words, might now come from screens. Teachers struggle to hold their attention in real classrooms. Reading emotion and intent needs extended in-person contact, a capacity that children and teens are increasingly missing out on as physical playtime shrinks.

"Veja du" is what some technologists call this illusory reality: the sense of having done something virtually without having experienced it in real life. We consider ourselves familiar

with famous destinations through VR, or imagine what we'll look like when we age, or even simulate romantic relationships with fictional characters.

This means losing out on embodied cognition. We think with our bodies, by making things physically. Note-taking on a laptop means shallow processing. Architects who draft by hand know the connections between mind and body that they are trading off for the efficiency of computation.

We now perform our emotions, with memes, gifs and emojis. One study found that college kids score 40% lower on empathy than those from 30 years ago, and this decline coincides with smartphone adoption.

Tech is also racing to supply what we miss in terms of bodily cues. Sensors and gadgets to measure breathing, heart rates, autonomic nervous signals already exist, but could soon be a standard smartphone capability. Persuasive tech, armed with huge amounts of precise data, could manipulate us and subvert our intentions.

Even the media ted pleasures of online living - the capacity to experience travel, sex, food, art, music - are overstimulating, the book says. "Artificially strong explosions of strong synthetic experience" habituate us, weaken our ability to notice the less intense moments of real life, which are more like "fleeing whispers of pleasure". As public places in cities - pavements, parks, cafes - became spaces where we are half in and half out, absorbed in our phones, we are robbed of serendipity and civic bonds.

While such panics have accompanied all new technologies from telegraph to television, the book warns that the digital takeover has had sudden and sweeping effects, and that it is important to recognise what we lose with every convenience we gain.

mindfield
SHORT TAKES ON BIG IDEAS



No Magic In Musk-aswamy?

Will Elon & Vivek be able to tame the beast that's US govt? Think back to Trump 1.0. Jared Kushner had brought in Jeff Bezos & Tim Cook to lead Office of American Innovation. That idea was dead on arrival

Dan Cassino



Columnist based in New Jersey

Republicans are hopeful that Trump will now be able to fundamentally reshape American govt in a way that largely eluded him during his first term. This belief follows from Trump this time being unbound by a need to run for re-election, or by insider appointees who thwarted some of his more extreme ideas last time.

A flurry of appointment picks by the President-elect includes far-right Matt Gaetz as Attorney General and former Democrat Tulsi Gabbard as Director of National Intelligence. The one announcement Maga Republicans are really excited by is that Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy will be leading a Department of Government Efficiency. But despite Trumpers' confidence, he isn't likely to have an easy time carrying out his ambitious agenda.

While there is a great deal that a US President can do on his own - action on immigration, tariffs, or foreign policy - most changes to domestic policy, like those expected from DOGE, require that he go through Congress. And while Trump will come into office with majorities in both House and Senate, and likely has two years before Democrats take control of one or both chambers, this doesn't ensure that passing bills will be easier.

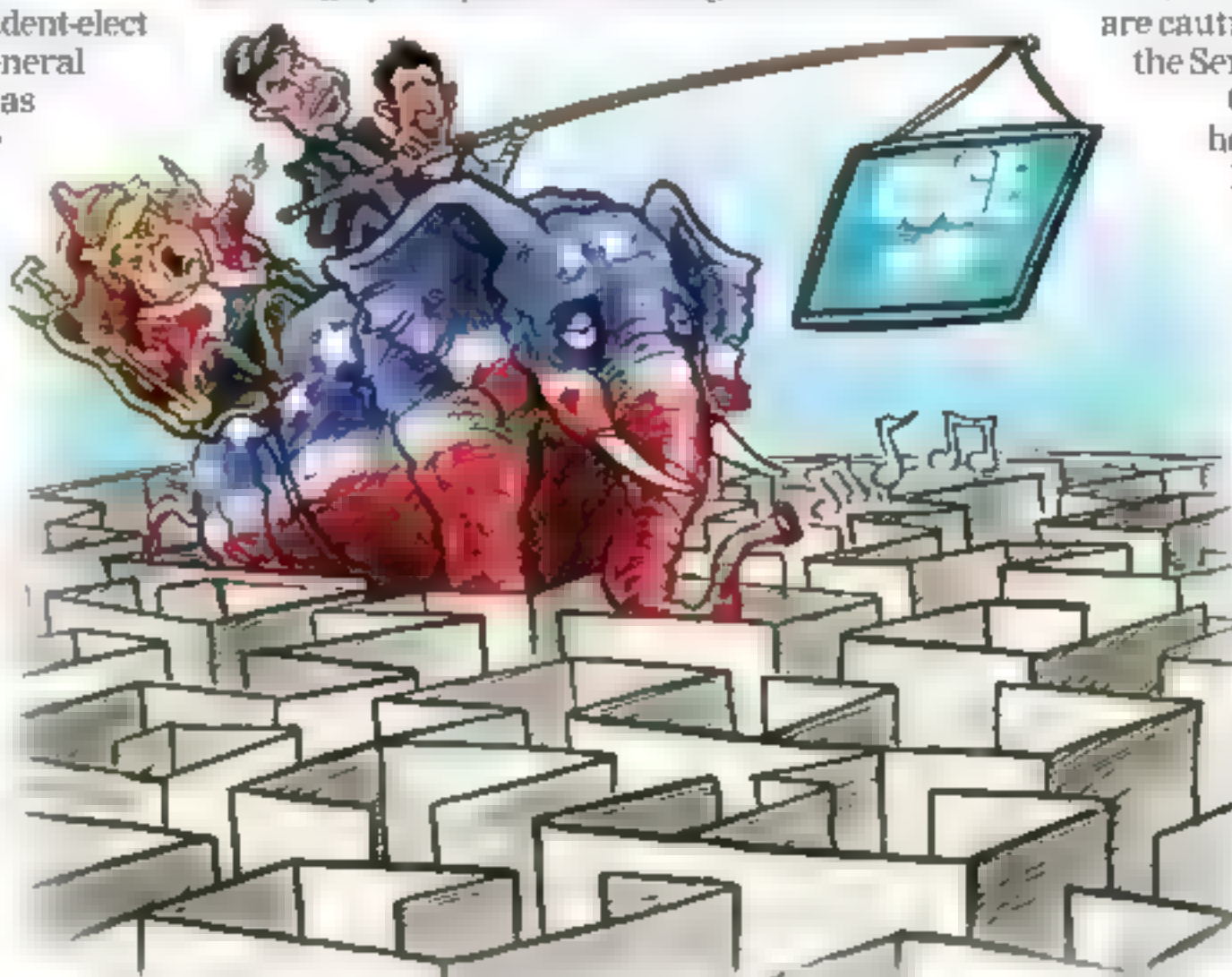
US President's ability to shape Congress to his demands is largely driven by his popularity, and Trump is going to come into office with the same kind of low approval numbers that characterised his first term.

When Eisenhower was President in the 1950s, he was enormously popular - more popular in the districts of many members of Congress than those members of Congress themselves were - and he was able to use that popularity to trample over the opposition to his agenda.

Jimmy Carter, on the other hand, was so unpopular by the end of his term that his legislative proposals were routinely ignored by Congress. Unable to get anything done in Congress, he was reduced to filling out the tennis schedules for the White House courts. Trump can threaten members of Congress, but low popularity means they can also choose to ignore him.

His attempts to pass bills will also be complicated by the very narrow margin he can expect in the House of Representatives, which operates on a majority rule basis. If the Speaker can secure a majority of the chamber, he or she can ram through just about any bill, with little or no opportunities for debate or amendment.

Some Speakers, like former Democratic Speaker Nancy Pelosi, proved themselves adept at pulling together majorities, even when the margins were tight. The current Speaker, Mike Johnson, has so far shown himself to be largely incapable of building those coalitions.



Chad Crowe (USA)

Having Trump pressure members of the extreme right wing of the party, who have been the biggest thorn in Johnson's side, might help. But passage of controversial bills through the House will require Johnson to get a lot better at his job than he's been to this point.

Proportionately, Trump will have a larger majority in the Senate, but face the additional obstacle of the Senate filibuster. Passage of any major bill requires 60 votes in the Senate, and Republicans would need the support of seven Democrats to reach that mark.

Trump and his supporters, like Democrats before them, have already started to argue that the filibuster

needs to be weakened to allow them to pass their legislative agenda. And while there might be a majority of Republicans willing to vote for that agenda, historically, there has never been a majority willing to drastically reduce the power of the filibuster.

Senators like the power it gives them as individuals to shape laws, and they worry about what a majority of the other side would do if they didn't have to worry about filibusters. Senators, unlike Trump, are likely to be worried about what happens five or ten years from now, when they're in the minority party, and therefore are cautious about hurting the power of the minority in the Senate now.

Of course, in both House and Senate, Trump is helped by the fact that most of the Trump sceptical Republicans, like John McCain or Mitt Romney, are no longer in office.

Many of the traditional conservatives who pushed back on Trump's legislation during his first term, as when McCain blocked the passage of Trump's attempt to repeal Obamacare, aren't in office anymore. Trump may have smaller majorities to work with in Congress, but those votes are much more loyal than during his first term.

Musk, Ramaswamy, and many of the people that Trump is bringing into govt believe that they can come in and fix the system. But there is precedent for the Department of Government Efficiency in Trump's first term - the Office of American Innovation.

That office brought together tech leaders like Jeff Bezos and Tim Cook in an attempt, led by Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, to fundamentally reshape federal govt along the lines of tech companies. Like DOGE, it started out with great ambitions - to solve the opioid crisis, boost the economy, modernise federal govt. With that much talent, and the ear of the President, it seemed like a sure bet.

At the end though, it made some recommendations, which were largely ignored by Congress, and was disbanded. Unless Trump does something fundamentally different this time around, and is somehow able to overcome the greater barriers facing him in his second term, his legislative agenda, and DOGE, are likely to meet the same fate.

The writer is Professor of Government and Politics at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Abuja Marks The Beginning Of This African Safari

Former envoy to key African nations argues PM's Nigeria visit is crucial bilaterally and for increasing India's heft in the continent

Rajiv Bhatia



Columnist based in New Delhi

Modi travels to a two-day trip to Nigeria - capital, Abuja - starting today. It constitutes the first leg of PM's transcontinental foray into summit diplomacy, which will also see him attending G20 summit in Brazil on Nov 18-19 and then visiting Guyana.

This trip offers a valuable opportunity to advance India's growing cooperation with Africa and the Global South. It comes on the heels of the Indian President's recent visit to three African countries.

By picking Nigeria, PM has recognised this nation's unique significance as Africa's most populous nation and its fourth largest economy. India has enjoyed close historical ties with it, as well as a "strategic partnership". However, the relationship is a work in progress, requiring a strong political push, especially as Nigeria is a regional and continental powerhouse.

Given its rich civilisational legacy, the Commonwealth connection, and its strong belief in unity amidst ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity, Nigeria has much in common with India. After struggling with a disastrous civil war and a cycle of military coups, Nigeria succeeded in building a democratic polity from 1999 onwards.

The nation admires India's classic path of 'democracy with inclusive development', drawing it to the country. Thanks to the excellent work of Indian teachers and traders in the past, the two peoples are familiar with each other,



PHOTO

with Bollywood being another factor that has brought them closer.

Modi will become the fourth Indian PM to visit Nigeria, after Jawaharlal Nehru (1952), Atal Bihari Vajpayee (2003), and Manmohan Singh (2007). The gap of 17 years since the last prime ministerial visit is notable, but it was punctuated by the visit of Vice President Hamid Ansari in 2016.

The commonalities and complementarities between the two countries make them natural allies. Betting on Africa's economic growth and expanding global profile, India needs to cooperate more extensively with Nigeria, which is a member of regional groupings like Ecowas and Opec.

India recognised Nigeria's global significance by inviting it as a guest nation to the G20 Summit last year. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who participated in the summit, is reciprocating the gesture by now hosting Modi. Taking the cue, Brazil has invited Nigeria to the G20 Summit this year, and South Africa may do so next year.

Nigeria has, thus, indeed arrived on the world stage. It is especially pleased with India's leadership role that resulted in the African Union securing permanent membership of G20. Nigeria's entry into Brics as a partner state is further proof of its growing heft.

Preparatory work has already been completed to elevate the India-Nigeria relationship. In Jan, foreign minister Jaishankar visited Nigeria to co-chair the Joint Commission meeting and held wide-ranging discussions with key stakeholders. Yet, on the economic side, there are challenges. Bilateral trade has declined from a peak of \$14.95bn in 2021 to \$7.89bn in 2023-2024.

This is partly due to India buying Russian oil at a discounted price rather than Nigerian crude from spot markets and partly due to Nigeria banning rice imports. However, India's export of engineering and pharmaceutical goods has much potential for bilateral trade. Areas such as agriculture, green energy, healthcare, and digital cooperation also show promise.

In this context, there is need to expand India's investment commitment of over \$27bn. Development cooperation, too, can be scaled up. Over 200 Indian companies based in Nigeria are regarded as the biggest foreign employer in the country.

Besides, the 60,000-strong Indian community has been making a useful contribution to bilateral relations.

Defence ties represent another significant pillar. The National Defence Academy at Kaduna and Naval War College at Port Harcourt are fine examples of defence cooperation between the two nations, buttressed by regular dialogue, exchange of training facilities, and Nigeria's purchase of Indian defence equipment.

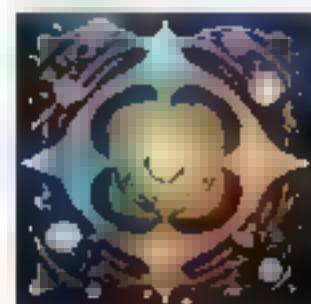
Strategic cooperation is now being piloted through a periodic dialogue between NSAs. Ajit Doval recently hosted the latest round. The dialogue focused on forging a close partnership to counter threats from terrorism, extremism, and radicalisation through cyberspace, international crime, arms, and drug trafficking, and a practical programme to enhance maritime security.

During Manmohan Singh's 2007 visit to Nigeria, four agreements were signed, and an understanding was reached to conclude nine additional agreements. Several of these agreements are nearing finalisation, and a few may be signed during Modi's visit.

The leaders now need to institute an effective mechanism to monitor progress in implementing all agreements. Greater involvement of apex business chambers should also be encouraged.

Finally, financial support should be extended to universities and think tanks to undertake studies on India-Nigeria relations and ensure dissemination of such efforts. Greater engagement at the people-to-people level would yield rich dividends in the long term.

Sacredspace



You don't meditate to experiment with altered states of consciousness or whatever else. You meditate only to perceive by yourself that everything is within us, every atom of the universe, and that we already possess everything we would wish to find outside of ourselves.

Daniel Odier

Calvin & Hobbes



THESE SUMMER DAYS SURE SLIP BY. DON'T THEY? TOO BAD THE DAILY DRUDGERY OF MAKING A LIVING HAS TO KEEP YOU FROM APPRECIATING THESE SUBLIME MOMENTS OF LIFE.



WELL, BEST NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT. IF YOU STAY HEALTHY, YOU CAN ENJOY DAYS LIKE THIS WHEN YOU RETIRE. SEE YOU TONIGHT!



From Matter To Consciousness To Supreme Cognition

Shri Shri Anandamurti

What is the meaning of the term 'purush'? The first meaning is, the entity that lies quiescent in the psycho-physical structure of another entity is called Purush. You may have noticed that different people perform various tasks in a house preparing for a marriage ceremony. However, the head of the family does not do any specific task but supervises the proper completion of all tasks. Similarly, Purush, cognitive faculty, lies hidden in the physical body. Without His wish, no organ of the body can function.

The second meaning is that the entity that resides before all other entities is Purush. The import of the above definitions is the same: Param Purush is the supreme reflecting principle. You may have thought about the primordial cause of this creation.

Early humans had an undeveloped intellect. To them, rainfall, the dawn and rice were symbols of gods and goddesses. The matter was of paramount importance. Long afterwards, humans realised that Param Purush is the supreme cause of creation. Time, nature, fate, accident and the five fundamental factors combination of all these was thought to be the supreme cause of creation.

While trying to discover the original cause of creation, we thought it must be eternal tempos. However, when the intellect developed, we discovered this hypothesis was incorrect because time is the mental measurement of the motivity of action. If there is no action, there is no question of any measurement of time. If the moon does not move around the Earth, no

question of days, months or years can arise. Hence, time is not the original cause.

Yet, out of inquisitiveness, human beings continued to search for the ultimate cause of creation. A question arose in their minds: Is nature the ultimate cause? The answer is no. Prakriti, the supreme operative principle, functions according to the limited freedom that Purush, the supreme cognitive faculty, has granted it. Purush is the transcendental entity, Prakriti is merely the immanent power of Purush. The style in which Purush functions is called nature. Nature cannot act independently and thus cannot be regarded as the absolute cause of creation, the supreme reflecting plate. The instrumental cause of the universe's metamorphosis lies in Prakriti's three principles. Prakriti is an entity that acts; however, it cannot be the

material cause or the efficient cause because there is no scope for any moral principle behind its actual faculty.

Shakti or energy is a blind force if not supported by prajna, intellect, it is always crude and static. The cognitive principle is both the material cause and the efficient cause of creation. In the flow of creation, the cognitive principle is also inseparably associated with the creative force. Hence, only the unmanifested supreme cognition, which is above both the cognitive principle and the operative force, can be the Supreme Reflecting Principle. When we reach both kshara and akshara, mutable and immutable, in the path of synthesis towards the One, we notice that in a previous stage, both of them have emanated from unmanifested, nirakshara, Supreme Cognition. This unmanifested Supreme Cognition is the Supreme Reflecting Principle.



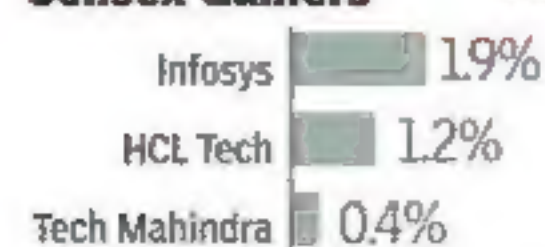
THE SPEAKING TREE

Sensex Loses Nearly 2,000 Pts In A Week

The sensex ended the holiday-shortened week with a 2.4% decline. The index logged its sixth weekly loss in seven, as worries about a slowdown in consumption added to concerns over earnings moderation

Sensex
-2.4%

Sensex Gainers

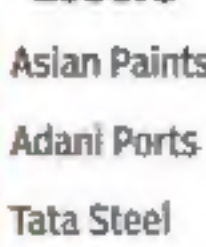


-10.3%

-7.2%

-6.5%

Losers



6.2%

Retail inflation surged to a 14-month high driven by food prices

Source: Refinitiv, ETIG

Reliance asks Trai to review reach of Musk's Starlink

New Delhi: Mukesh Ambani's Reliance has asked telecom regulator Trai to review the potential reach of Elon Musk's Starlink and Amazon's Kuiper before awarding satellite spectrum amid concerns local players could suffer, a letter showed on Friday. RIL's letter, which is not public, is Ambani's last-ditch effort in a face-off with Musk over how India should grant spectrum for satellite services. Starlink, Amazon & RIL did not respond. REUTERS



Forex reserves fall for 6th week to 3-mth low

Foreign exchange reserves dropped for a sixth week to a near 3-month low of \$675.7 billion as of Nov 8, RBI data showed. The reserves fell by \$6.5 billion in the reporting week and are down \$29.2 billion from the late-Sept peak. REUTERS

Gold trades near two-month low

Gold traded near a two-month low, as traders wind back expectations for a Federal Reserve interest-rate cut next month after comments from Fed chief Jerome Powell underscored resilience in the US economy. BLOOMBERG

Pharma stocks slide as Trump picks RFK Jr

Pharma stocks slumped as President-elect Donald Trump said he's tapping Robert F Kennedy Jr. to run the department of health & human services, potentially elevating a vaccine sceptic to a top role on health policy. BLOOMBERG

Reliance Big Ent fined ₹26cr by Sebi

Sebi has asked Reliance Big Entertainment to pay Rs 26 crore in fines for failing to clear penalties imposed by the market regulator in Aug this year (Rs 25 crore then) in a case pertaining to illegal diversion of funds. AGENCIES

figure it out

Over \$100tn
is the projection of global public debt in 2024



Source: IMF

Chip design co MediaTek to boost India hiring

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New Delhi: In a big push to govt's semiconductor localisation plans, Taiwan's top chip design company MediaTek has said it will ramp up hirings in India as the company gained market leadership in supplies to smartphone makers, while it expands its business in automobiles, computing, connected, 5G, and internet-of-things (IoT). The company will hire more engineers and designers in India to work on global chips as it moved ahead of American Qualcomm in supplying to smartphone makers in the country for their budget as well as premium devices (according to data from Counterpoint), India MD Anku Jain and global VP for corporate marketing Finbarr Moynihan told TOI.

Online credit card payments' share rises to 65% on e-sales

In Transaction Volume, Offline Marginally Higher Than E-Pay

Mayur.Shetty
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DASH FOR DISCOUNTS



While value of online transactions has surpassed in-store payments for some time, volume of online transactions still lags physical transactions
In Sept, in-store transactions numbered 19.8 crore, marginally higher than 19.4 crore e-payments
The surge in online spending aligns with the rise in e-commerce sales during the festive season

Mumbai: Online spends through credit cards have continued to surge driven by e-commerce discounts. In Sept 2024, credit card users spent Rs 1,15,168 crore online, accounting for 65.4% of the total Rs 1,76,201-crore card spends, official data showed.

In other words, for every one rupee spent by swiping credit cards at a point-of-sale machine, two rupees were spent online. In April, online spends were at Rs 94,516 crore, making up 60% of the total Rs 1,56,498 crore. The share of online spending rose to 63.4% in July, dipped slightly to 62.4% in Aug, and reached 65.3% in Sept bolstered by online sales.

While the value of online transactions has surpassed in-store payments for some time, volume of online transactions still lags physical transactions. In Sept, in-store

transactions numbered 19.8 crore, marginally higher than 19.4-crore online payments. In April, offline transactions were 18.4 crore compared to 15.9 crore online. The surge in online spending aligns with the rise in e-commerce sales during the festive season, which began in Sept.

Datum Intelligence estimated that e-commerce sales in Sept and Oct reached about \$12 billion, up 23% from last year, driven by sales at e-commerce platforms like Flip-

kart and Amazon, where online sales rose 26%, led by mobile phones and electronics. In quick-commerce, online card spends are growing 74% year-on-year, according to Datum — taking business away from kirana stores.

The growth in online payments is also supported by rising utility payments. In Q2 FY25, there were 62.7 crore online bill payments worth Rs 2,38,897 crore, up from 45.6 crore transactions totalling Rs 1,23,345 crore in Q1. The

NPCI Bharat Bill Payment data however includes payments made through UPI and debit cards.

A survey by Paisabazaar on festive shopping trends among 700 credit card users showed a preference for online purchases due to card-specific offers and convenience. Of the respondents, 45% were from tier-1 metros, 68% were salaried employees, and 76% were under 35 years old. The survey revealed that 80% of users found more value in online shopping during the festive season; 48% shopped exclusively online, while 45% combined online and in-store shopping.

Only 7% preferred in-store shopping. Around 80% of users utilised credit card offers, clearly indicating that consumer appetite for premium timepieces remains robust despite inflationary pressures. Rahul Shukla, VP and chief sales & marketing officer (watches & wearables) at Titan, told TOI.

Inflation no bar for wealthy shoppers

High Prices Hit Mass Market Spends Even As Premium Products Drive Bulk Of Sales

Asmita.Dey@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Even as inflation has hit discretionary spending in the broader mass markets, the well-heeled continue to splurge.

Titan's watches priced above Rs 50,000 and its new Astra Meteorite pieces, which come with a price tag of Rs 1,30,000, saw takers this festive season. Premium products, in fact, drove the bulk of sales for the company, which claims to have recorded a 34% year-on-year growth in sales value in the recently concluded festive season. "Alongside, we also witnessed healthy volume growth of 27% (for watches), clearly indicating that consumer appetite for premium timepieces remains robust despite inflationary pressures," Rahul Shukla, VP and chief sales & marketing officer (watches & wearables) at Titan, told TOI.

Inflation typically impacts the lower strata of society, those who allot their budgets towards essentials when there is an uptick in the general price level. Mirroring the trend seen over the past few years, premium has been the flavour this festive season too — across categories ranging from fashion to electronics. For Godrej Appliances, ACs grew by 49% while fully automatic front-load washing machines were among the top-selling products. "Discretionary spending continues to hold steady, especially for premium households," said Kamal Nandi, business head & executive VP at the company which saw a 50% YoY growth in sales in Oct.

Haier saw heavy demand for its premium range like AI-enabled refrigerators, washing machines and air fryer microwaves while Voltas recorded good sales of its 'smart' ACs.

'AI' REFRIGERATORS TO ₹50,000 WATCHES

Premium products drove the bulk of sales for Titan, which saw several takers for its watches priced above ₹50,000
For Godrej Appliances, air-conditioners grew by 49% while fully automatic front-load washing machines were among the top-selling products
Haier saw heavy demand for its premium range like AI-enabled refrigerators, washing machines and air

dent in mass markets where price sensitivity has curbed discretionary spending," Badri Berwal, chief strategy & business development officer at Bata India, said.

On Amazon, premium smartphones priced above ₹30,000 saw the highest YoY volume growth. Luxe home sales also doubled, the platform said
While retail sales rose during the festive season, the growth rates were slower at 15% in 2024 compared to 32% in 2023 and 88% in 2022

However, retailers are pinning hopes on the upcoming wedding season to fuel sales in the mass markets. Spending by the segment was not totally muted — categories like budget 5G smartphones priced at less than Rs 10,000, single-door refrigerators and semi-automatic washing machines have seen traction. "This growth in mass segment could also be linked to the onset of an extended wedding season across the country from mid-Nov," Nandi said, adding that it is likely to result in higher sell-out at stores in the next two months as well.

"The festive period is still not over, there will likely be around 4.8 million weddings during the wedding season in Nov and Dec in addition to new-year related spending towards the end of the year," analysts at Nomura said.

India's eco to grow 7.2% in '24: Moody's

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Indian economy is in a sweet spot, with a mix of solid growth and moderating inflation, global ratings agency Moody's Ratings said on Friday and forecast 7.2% growth for calendar year 2024, followed by 6.6% in 2025 and 6.5% in 2026. Moody's said India's economy is growing robustly and has the potential to sustain high growth rates as strong private sector financial health reinforces a virtuous economic cycle. RBI has projected a GDP growth rate of 7.2%, while govt expects it to grow in the range of 6.5%-7%.

The report said household consumption is poised to grow, fuelled by increased spending during the ongoing festive season and a sustained pickup in rural demand on the back of an improved agricultural outlook. It also said that rising capacity utilisation, upbeat business sentiment and govt's continued thrust on infrastructure spending should support private investment.

Canara Bank tags RCom as fraud a/c

Mumbai: Reliance Communications informed stock exchanges that Canara Bank has classified the company and its subsidiary, Reliance Telecom, as fraud accounts. The company noted that this development is not expected to impact its operations as it is undergoing the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP), which protects it from any proceedings.

Canara Bank's decision came after a forensic audit report highlighted fraudulent transactions. The bank stated that Reliance Communications' response to an earlier show-cause notice was unsatisfactory, leading to the account's classification as fraud. TNN

At 8.8%, Chhattisgarh records highest retail inflation in Oct

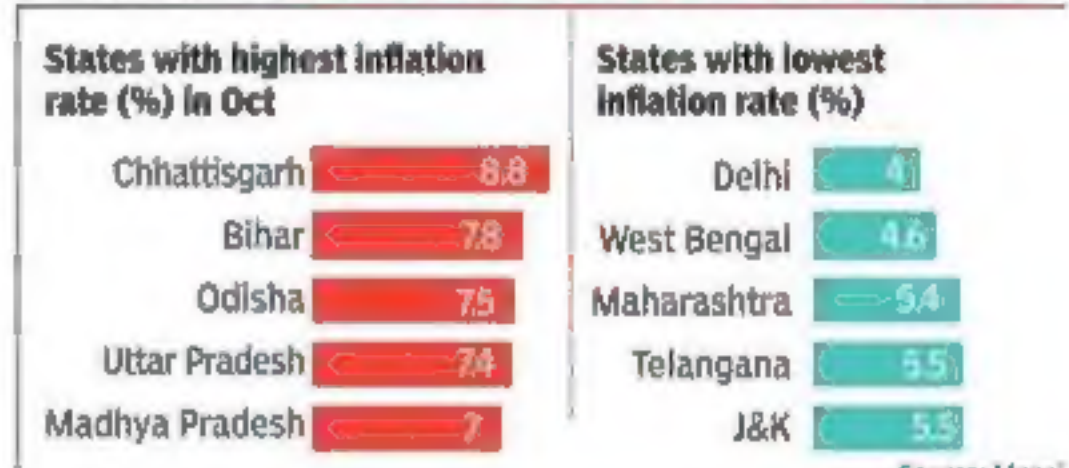
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Chhattisgarh witnessed the highest inflation rate among states and Union territories in Oct, followed by Bihar, highlighting the inflationary pressures across the country stoked by stubborn food prices.

The latest retail inflation data for Oct released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed Chhattisgarh recorded an inflation rate of 8.8%, while Bihar had a rate of 7.8%. Odisha was in third place with a rate of 7.5%, followed by Uttar Pradesh at 7.4% and Madhya Pradesh at 7%.

Out of the 22 states and UTs for which data is available, half of them recorded an inflation rate above 6%. Delhi had the lowest inflation rate of 4%, followed by West Bengal and Maharashtra. According to the latest data, retail inflation surged to a 14-month high of 8.2% in Oct, led by soaring food

Delhi Sees Lowest Rate Of Price Rise



Source: Mospi

prices — particularly vegetables. The retail inflation rate in Oct has breached RBI's upper tolerance band of 6%, dashing hopes of any cut in interest rates for now. Vegetables, cereals, fruits, oils and fats have been identified as key factors behind the price surge.

Experts say there are several factors that influence the varying inflation rates across states, including supply issues. The sharp increase in retail inflation and wholesale price inflation,

which rose to a four-month high of 2.4% in Oct largely led by high food prices, has triggered a debate with commerce minister Piyush Goyal calling upon the Reserve Bank of India to cut rates, arguing that targeting food price inflation through interest rates was an "absolutely flawed theory." Earlier, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das had cautioned about upside risks to inflation from factors such as food prices and said a rate cut should not be taken for granted.

Irdai looks at new supervision norms

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Insurance regulator Irdai is laying the groundwork for a new supervisory system for insurance companies. It was a key topic of discussion at the 8th Bima Manthan held here. The meeting brought together top Irdai officials and leaders from across the insurance industry for a two-day summit focused on preparing the sector for the future.

With an eye on global standards, discussions centred on risk management, new financial reporting rules, and the implementation of a risk-based supervisory framework (RBSF). RBSF employed by several countries worldwide, allows regulators to focus their attention on the insurers posing the greatest risk to the system, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. By assessing factors like financial stability, governance, and compliance history,

regulators can tailor their oversight and intervene early where necessary.

Both regulators and insurance companies shared insights gleaned from pilot studies and impact assessments, paving the way for a smoother transition to the RBSF. The meeting also highlighted the progress of Bima Sugam, a digital platform designed to simplify the insurance experience for consumers. This initiative, along with a renewed focus on cybersecurity in the face of evolving digital threats, underscores the industry's commitment to modernisation and consumer protection.

Expanding insurance penetration and exploring new avenues for capital augmentation, such as encouraging insurance companies to go public, were also key themes. The Bima Manthan demonstrated a unified effort within the insurance sector to achieve the ambitious goal of "Insurance for All by 2047."

'Listed insurers not generating enough returns'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Indian insurers have fared poorly in productivity despite growth in volumes, with commissions, operating and marketing expenses rising sharply, according to a report by McKinsey. According to the report, Indian companies are doing much worse than MNCs in Asia in terms of productivity.

The report said that listed life companies have been unable to generate sufficient returns to cover their cost of equity in the past two to three years. "This raises questions about the long-term viability of their business model. The three largest listed private life insurers had return on equity (ROE) minus cost of equity (COE) ranging between -3.9% and 1.6%. Although value-of-new-business (VNB) margins for these players improved during this period from about 17% to over 25%, they are relatively low compared with MNC players in the Asian market, which boast VNB margins exceeding 50%," the report said.

GALLERY

Rohan-Ebden duo finishes on a winning note

Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden, who climbed to the world No.1 ranking as a team early in the season, finished on a winning note in the ATP Finals in Turin. Bopanna and Ebden, who lost their first two group encounters, playing themselves out of the season-ending feature, however claimed their last match as a team with a 7-5, 6-7 (6), 10-8 result against German pair of Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz.

Fritz secures semifinal spot: Italian world number one Jannik Sinner eased past Daniil Medvedev 6-3 6-4 in their final group match, leaving Taylor Fritz to seal a place in the semi-finals of the season-ending ATP Finals after the American defeated Alex de Minaur 5-7 6-4 6-3.

Eng win 3rd T20i vs WI, clinch 5-match series: Fast bowler Saqib Mahmood again knocked the top off the West Indies innings to set up England's 3-wicket win in the third Twenty20 International which clinched a series victory with two matches remaining. Set 146, England reached its target with seven wickets down and four balls to spare.

Haryana to face Odisha in final: Haryana will face Odisha in the summit clash of the 14th Hockey India Senior Men's National Championship. While Odisha defeated Manipur 4-2 in the first semifinal, Haryana edged out Uttar Pradesh 3-2 in the second semifinal. TNN/AGENCIES

ACTION TODAY

CRICKET: Ranji, 9.30 am (Jio); Aus vs Pak, 2nd T20i, 1.30 pm (Star); Eng vs WI, 4th T20i, 1.30 am Friday (Fancode); **FOOTBALL:** Nations League, Azerbaijan vs Estonia, 6.30 pm; Türkiye vs Wales, 9.30 pm; Germany vs Bosnia-Herzegovina 12.30 am Friday (Sony)

SHOCK AND DRAW

Messi, Vinicius Suffer Frustrating Night As Argentina Lose And Brazil Earn Stalemate

Montevideo: World champions Argentina suffered a 2-1 defeat to Paraguay while rivals Brazil were held to a 1-1 draw at Venezuela as South America's big guns struggled in CONMEBOL World Cup qualifying on Thursday. It started well for Lionel Scaloni's team as they grabbed an early lead through Inter Milan striker Lautaro Martinez. Enzo Fernandez lofted a lovely ball over the Paraguay defence into the path of Martinez who drove in a low finish only for his celebration to be cut short by the linesman's flag. But a VAR review found that Martinez had been just inside and over-ruled the on-field decision giving Argentina an 11th-minute lead.

WC QUALIFIERS

It was an advantage that was to last just eight minutes though as the home side drew level in spectacular fashion. Gustavo Velazquez whipped in a cross and Antonio Sanabria fired past Emiliano Martinez with a brilliantly executed bicycle kick. Two minutes after the interval Omar Alderete grabbed what proved to be the winner, rising at the back post to head home a cross from Inter Miami midfielder Diego Gomez. Argentina struggled to create openings with Lionel Messi largely neutralised. Vinicius Junior missed a penalty as Brazil had to settle for a point after a superb Raphinha free-kick was cancelled out by a second half strike from Telasco Segovia. The result leaves the five-times World Cup winners in third place on 17 points. Brazil showed signs of their old swagger as they took the game to Venezuela at the Monumental



NO WAY THROUGH: Venezuela's goalkeeper Rafael Romero thwarts Brazil's Vinicius Jr



Lionel Messi reacts after the loss against Paraguay

FRANCE-ISRAEL MATCH SEES 40 ARRESTS

Paris: Police made 40 arrests at a tense match between France and Israel in Paris but the city's police chief said on Friday the huge security operation had "worked very well". The Nations League game at the Stade de France on Thursday took place under intense security after fans of Israeli club Maccabi Tel Aviv were attacked in Amsterdam last week. Around 4,000 police and members of the French security forces patrolled inside and outside the stadium, assisted by 1,600 civilian security personnel.

Stewards had to intervene at one point to stop fans from clashing in the stands. "A fight broke out which was immediately contained by the stewards," Paris police chief Laurent Nunez told France 2 television. The match finished in a 0-0 draw with no further incidents inside the stadium. The draw was enough to secure France a top-two finish in its group along with Italy, which beat Belgium 1-0 away thanks to Sandro Tonali's 11th-minute goal. They advance to the quarterfinals in March, from which the lineup of the Final Four mini-tournament in June will be determined. Germany and Spain were the first two nations to qualify for the quarterfinals in October.

ENGLAND SECOND STRING MAKES LIGHT OF MISSING STARS TO SINK GREECE

Athens: Lee Carsley claimed England's 3-0 win against Greece showed the strength in depth that awaits Thomas Tuchel when he takes over as coach. England were hit by a rash of withdrawals before Thursday's Nations League clash in Athens, but Carsley's team made light of the absences. England captain Harry Kane was surprisingly dropped to the bench but Kane's replacement Ollie Watkins gave them an early lead. Greece goalkeeper Odysseas Vlachodimos deflected Jude Bellingham's shot into his own net. Curtis Jones' audacious back-flicked effort wrapped up the win. **Japan thrashed Indonesia 4-0** in Jakarta on Friday as Hajime Moriyasu's relentless side moved seven points clear at the top of Group C of Asia's 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

THEIR GOALS CAME FROM TWO OF OUR MISTAKES. WE NEED TO FIX OUR LAPSES ON SET-PIECES."
—Lautaro Martinez, ARGENTINA STRIKER

Stadium. Vinicius was at the heart of much of Brazil's attacking play and almost created an early opening.

The winger broke free and was forced wide as he rounded home keeper Rafael Romero but he pulled the ball back to Raphinha in a promising central position only for the Barcelona forward's shot to go well off target. AGENCIES

DESCHAMPS OPENS UP OVER MBAPPE'S FORM

Paris: France coach Didier Deschamps said that there are both physical and psychological reasons for Kylian Mbappé's rough patch of form. After France drew 0-0 with Israel in the Nations League,

Deschamps was again asked about the reasons behind the Real Madrid striker's absence from his squad. "It's a fact that he is in a difficult situation," Deschamps said. "He is going through a period which is not the happiest of his career." Mbappe was not included in Deschamps' list for the match against Israel and a game

in Italy later this week. Mbappe was also absent from the previous France gathering because of a minor thigh injury. This time he is not injured. "He wanted to come," Deschamps said. "It's better for him (not to be selected) at the moment. There is a physical element and a psychological one," Deschamps said. AP

Big China test awaits India

Upbeat Hosts Take On Olympic Silver Medallists

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Rajgir: The Indian women's hockey team might have scored 13 goals in their last match against Thailand in the Asian Champions Trophy but the real test awaits them on Saturday when they take on China in their fourth game of the tournament at the Rajgir Sports Complex here.

ACT PREVIEW

China have come here with just two players from their silver-winning Paris Olympics squad — Fan Yunxia and Tan Jinzhuang — but they have still been unstoppable in the continental meet so far. Only Japan came close to troubling them in their last tie but the world No. 6 team was able to hold on for a win in the end. As for their opener against Thailand, they scored an unbelievable 15 goals, and thanks to that they are on top of the table with nine points from three matches. India have the same number of points. India's recent showing against China has not been

impressive. In the last five matches that the two teams have contested, India have won only once, which was during the Asian Champions Trophy in Ranchi last year. As for the other four matches, China won three — including the Asian Games semifinal tie — and one finished in a draw.

Despite this, India coach Harendra Singh believes the hosts — who also beat Malaysia 4-0 and South Korea 3-2 — are well prepared to contain the Chinese side, especially after their performance against Thailand. He said the will not try anything different and will look to continue with what they have been doing so far.

"We will do what we have trained so far and where we have been focusing on over the past three matches. You cannot come to the tournament and start doing new things because that way you would be confusing the players," said the coach.

Taking that as a cue, the Indian women are most likely going to stick to attacking down the right channel. With Salima Tete and Sunelita Toppo making the runs down that side, India have created numerous opportunities in the last three matches, impressing their coach.

Manisha happy team is back to scoring goals

Rajgir: India's biggest concern coming into the 2024 Women's Asian Champions Trophy was their failure to score goals.

Even if the players were able to find the target from open play, the penalty corners just weren't coming and it was one of the major reasons why the team failed to make it to the Olympics. But speaking ahead of the tournament, India coach Harendra Singh had said that he is confident that Deepika and Manisha Chauhan will deliver from the PCs, **reports Arnab Seal.**

Manisha, playing only the fifth international match of her career, came up with a strong performance. The girl from Uttarakhand was brimming with joy at the end of the game. "Very happy that we were able to do what we had planned. It's a dream come true to finally achieve something after we had worked so hard to achieve it," said the 25-year-old.

Worlds medal-winning Indian para powerlifter banned for doping

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New Delhi: Gold Coast CWG bronze medal winner, Indian para powerlifter Sachin Chaudhary, has been handed an eight-year ban by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) for failing a dope test. Chaudhary returned adverse analytical findings (AAFs) for prohibited substances in a urine sample provided in competition on Dec 4, 2021 during the men's up to 97kg event at Tbilisi Para Powerlifting Senior World Championships.

The banned substances were metandienone and stymine, which are on World Anti-Doping Agency's (Wada) 2021 prohibited list under the class S1.1 anabolic androgenic steroids and class S6 stimulants. The athlete was provisionally suspended by the IPC on Jan 31, 2022 pending a resolution of his case. During the IPC's investigation, the athlete confirmed that he had continued coaching other athletes during his provisional suspension, thereby failing to respect the terms of that provisional suspension set out in article 10.14.1 of the IPC IF rules.

Dominant Carlsen reigns supreme

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Kolkata: Magnus Carlsen perhaps doesn't like a close finish. Many expected a thrilling end to the open category of the rapid section of Tata Steel India Open Rapid and Blitz meet here on Friday with Uzbekistan Nodirbek Abdusattorov breathing down Carlsen's neck with just half-a-point difference between the two.

But in the end Carlsen emerged champion with a round to go as Abdusattorov suffered two losses in the opening two rounds of the last day, while Carlsen continued his good run to get past Vincent Keymer and Daniil Dubov. In the ninth and last round, Abdusattorov did provide some scare to Carlsen who managed to hold on for a draw to end with 7.5 points, a good two points more than Wesley So and R Praggnanandhaa, who were tied for second spot. But the Indian's superior tie-break score earned him the first runner-up position, while So took the third spot.

Rapid final standings (Top 3)
Open: Magnus Carlsen (7.5), R. Praggnanandhaa (5.5), Wesley So (5.5); **Women:** Aleksandra Goryachkina (7.5), Nana Dzagnidze (5.5), Vantika Agrawal (5)

37 of 43 J'khand seats saw higher female turnout in Ph-1

► Continued from P 1

A daily account of such postal ballots received are given to all candidates. INDIA bloc, comprising JMM, Congress and RJD, claimed higher turnout of women showed popularity of welfare schemes of the He-mant Soren govt. Matyya Sam-man Yojana in particular under which Rs 1,000 per month is given to women beneficiaries. BJP, on the other hand, said high turnout showed women's disenchantment with Soren govt. "They have voted in large numbers because they are fed up with over 7,000 cases of crimes against women in the past five years. They have voted in large numbers because BJP promised Rs 2,100 under Goto Didi Yojana," BJP spokesperson Pratul Shahdeo said.

Baharagora witnessed highest overall turnout at 79.3%, thanks to its women voters whose participation was 81.6%

Of 43 assembly constituencies (AC) that voted on Nov 13, 37 recorded a higher female turnout as compared to men. Only six ACs — Potka, Jugsalai, Jamshedpur East, Serakela, Tamar and Khunti — recorded higher male polling percentage, though the gender gap was less than one percentage point in four of these six ACs. In Barkatha and Barhi, the gap between female and male turnout was almost 17 percentage points and 15 percentage points, respectively.

Baharagora witnessed highest overall turnout at 79.3%, thanks to its women voters whose participation was 81.6%. Kharsawan followed with 79.1% overall turnout and almost 80% polling by women. Ranchi witnessed urban apathy and recorded the lowest polling at 52.5%. While 13 of the 43 ACs covered in Phase I recorded a turnout of over 70%, polling was in the range of 60-70% for 25 ACs and below 60% for five ACs.

Draft text fails to address concerns of Global South

India Pushes For \$1.3Tn Per Year Funding Till 2030

Baku: With negotiations at COP29 on the crucial issue of climate finance heading for an intense round of talks against the backdrop of a new draft decision text, India has asked developed countries to commit to provide



and mobilise at least \$1.3 trillion every year till 2030 through grants, concessional finance and non-debt-inducing support, without subjecting developing nations to "growth-inhibiting conditionalities in provision of finance". It also emphasised that the support must cater to "evolving needs and priorities of developing countries". The heavily-bracketed



India linked developing countries' move to update their 2025 climate action targets with climate finance commitment of rich nations

draft text was released on Friday without actually addressing the concerns of developing countries. Though the number of pages of the new text was reduced from 34 to 25 by removing inconsequential options, the key points of concerns of the Global South continue to be there without any acceptable changes.

India through its intervention during high-level meeting on the issue also linked developing countries' move to update their climate action targets next year with

climate finance commitment of rich nations, saying such a scenario (adequate financial support) is "vital for advancing towards COP30, where all parties (countries) are expected to submit their updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)". The remark is a clear message to Global North (rich nations) that the developing countries won't be able to set ambitious emission cut targets unless provided with adequate and "no strings attached" finance. India put across its point,

in sync with demand of developing countries, through the intervention on Thursday on behalf of Like Minded Developing Countries (LM-DC) representing over 20 nations during climate negotiations. Earlier, G77 plus China group, representing over 130 developing countries, had given a similar pitch in the submission, making it clear that anything less than \$1.3 trillion annual finance flow from developed to developing countries for climate action may not be acceptable to the Global South.

Making the intervention, Naresh Pal Gangwar, environment ministry's additional secretary and India's lead negotiator at COP29, also reiterated developing countries' consistent stand on negotiation process and climate finance, indicating that dilution of principles of UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement will not be acceptable to the Global South keeping in view the historical responsibilities of rich nations.

Power supply shut to avoid 'disaster' at MP petrol leak site

► Continued from P 1

The oil-in-a-day's work drama happened in Gedeam region. When residents of a few villages went to the wells for their morning ablutions, they were surprised when they smelled like petrol. When it drew up buckets of water, what they got was petrol. News spread like wildfire. Gleeful villagers gathered the oil by the bucketful. The 'happy news' reached the administration as well. Officials were alarmed at the potential of a fire disaster and rushed teams to the villages. Officials of a petroleum PSU also arrived. They found that wells were indeed swimming with petrol.

A quick check revealed that owner of a nearby fuel pump was bewildered at losing 14,000-litre petrol and had filed a police complaint, suspecting it was stolen. Officials believe the petrol leaked out of an underground 16,000-litre reservoir.

Police have sealed off the wells to ensure there is no accident. Fire tenders have been positioned. Electricity supply was shut for fear that a spark would trigger a disaster, and roads were barricaded for hours. People have been asked not to use inflammable items until an all-clear is given.

Dantewada collector in-charge Jayant Nahata said one well was affected but villagers say petrol was found in multiple wells. After preliminary probe, police say the reservoir was cracked and the petrol found its way to the groundwater channels, ending up in wells. Police are going around recovering buckets of petrol and the region remains sealed off for the time being.

Nahata told TOI that an inquiry was ordered. Hindustan Petroleum was asked to hold a probe too & assist in remedial measures. A thorough testing of 21 samples of ground sources, including soil and water collected from the area surrounding the petrol pump, was done with no traces of odour or petrol found in them. One well was found contaminated. Petrol is being extracted from it using pumps," he added.

Committed to strengthening ties with Lanka: India

► Continued from P 1

Sri Lanka's Samagi Jana Balawegaya headed by Sajith Premadasa was a distant second with 40 seats. Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi got eight seats, New Democratic Front five, and Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna and Sri Lanka Muslim Congress three each. Indian high commissioner Santosh Jha called on Dissanayake shortly after outcome of the snap polls became clear and is learned to have reiterated PM Modi's invitation to Dissanayake to visit India at a mutually convenient date.

The invitation was delivered by foreign minister S Jaishankar when he met the president last month.

"As a fellow democracy India welcomes the mandate and remains committed to further strengthening bilateral ties for the benefit of our peoples," said the Indian high commissioner in a post on X. Jaishankar had visited Sri Lanka barely a fortnight after presidential polls, becoming the first foreign minister to call on the president.

His visit signalled that Dissanayake, despite his party's traditionally anti-India position, was responding positively to India's efforts to reach out to him that saw the govt hosting him here in Feb.

In his meeting with Jaishankar in Oct, Dissanayake assured him that Lankan territory would never be allowed to be used in a manner inimical to India's security interests. Dissanayake was said to have acknowledged the importance of efforts to promote trust, transparency and mutual sensitivity. This is important for India in context of Sri Lanka's growing ties with China even as, according to both govts, Indian and Lankan security interests remain intertwined.

However, while Dissanayake has recognised the potential of export of renewable energy to India that could help reduce production costs in his country, India remains concerned about his pre-election threat to scrap a wind power project of Adani group because of environmental issues.

Yogi seeks report on Jhansi hospital fire within 12 hours

► Continued from P1

The hospital is a key centre for deliveries and neonatal care in the district. On chief minister Yogi Adityanath's direction, deputy CM Bhanu Prakash Pathak and principal secretary health and ADG Kanpur zone left for Jhansi to supervise the rescue operations. The CM has sought a report on the incident from Jhansi divisional commissioner and DIG within 12 hours.

Police force has also been deployed to maintain order outside the hospital.

The CM expressed grief over the tragedy and conveyed his condolences to the families of the victims. He has directed officials and doctors to immediately reach the spot and carry out relief and rescue work on a war footing.

Senior district officials have reached the site. A team of specialists from Kanpur has also been dispatched.

Initial reports suggested that a cylinder blast triggered the fire at the hospital. However, this is yet to be confirmed. The hospital's electricity supply was cut off as a precautionary step.



DOUBLE THE FUN!

Johannesburg: Sanju Samson and Tilak Varma slammed centuries to guide India to a 3-1 T20I series win against South Africa on Friday. After the duo helped India post 283/1, the team restricted South Africa to 148 in 18.2 overs to record a win by 135 runs.

Arshdeep Singh shone with the ball with a deadly spell upfront (3/20), with all other Indian bowlers chipping in with wickets on a sporting Wanderers wicket.

Earlier, Sanju Samson's precision met its match in Tilak Varma's muscular elegance as India toyed with the South African bowling attack to post an imposing total in the fourth and final match of the series on Friday.

This is India's highest T20I total overseas and highest by any country on South African soil. Among the plethora of records that tumbled, the most special one will be two Indian batters scoring centuries in the same T20I innings. In the process, Samson and Varma also posted the highest partnership for India in T20Is – 210 off just 93 balls for the second wicket.

Samson (109 not out off 56 balls), who smashed a superb century in the first game, once again pummelled the Proteas in company of Varma (120 not out off 47 balls), who has really come into his own with new-found confidence and vigour at No. 3.

Samson now has three T20I tons in the last five knocks, which also included two ducks, while Varma has scored back-to-back T20I tons. Samson completed his ton in 51 balls while Varma's (41 balls) took 10 balls less. Abhishek Sharma (36 off 18 balls) should also get his share of credit for upping the ante in the Powerplay with four huge sixes.

On a good batting track with true bounce on offer, Indian batters hit a record 23 sixes as it was possible to hit through the line by just clearing one's front leg. Samson's nine maximums was one less than Varma's 10.

It only helped India that the opposition's best fast bowler Gerald Coetzee seemed to be carrying a niggles. AGENCIES

210*

Unbroken partnership between Sanju Samson and Tilak Varma for the second wicket, India's highest partnership for any wicket in T20Is and the first double-century stand for the second wicket by any pair in T20Is.

283/1

India's total, their highest total in an overseas T20I and the second highest overall behind the 297/6 vs Bangladesh in Hyderabad on Oct 12, 2024. This is the highest score by any team vs South Africa.

5

Tilak Varma (107* in Century and 120* in Johannesburg) has become the fifth batter and the second Indian to record back-to-back T20I tons.

3

Hundreds by Sanju Samson in T20Is this year, a record for most centuries in a calendar year.

SCOREBOARD

India: S Samson not out 109, A Sharma c Klaasen b Sipamla 36, T Varma not out 120; Extras (nb1, w17): 18; Total (28 ov; RR: 14.15): 283/1; FoWs: 1-73; Bowling: Jansen 4-0-42-0, Coetzee 3-0-43-0, Sipamla 4-0-58-1, Simelane 3-0-47-0, Maharaj 3-0-42-0, Markram 2-0-30-0, Stubbs 1-0-21-0 (scoreboard incomplete)



SMASH HITS: Tilak Varma exults after scoring his second consecutive T20I ton while Sanju Samson (right) scored his second ton of the series



PIR: AP

Records Tumble As Samson, Tilak Tons Help India Win T20I Series Against SA

23 Sixes hit by Indian batters in their total, an Indian record for most sixes in a T20I, bettering the 22 vs Bangladesh in Hyderabad on Oct 12, 2024.

—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

BCCI slams PCB's plan for CT tour in PoK, seeks ICC action

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Mumbai: The controversy surrounding the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, last held in 2017, continues to escalate with no tournament schedule — originally set to begin on Feb 19 and conclude on March 8 — in sight.

On Friday, BCCI secretary Jay Shah raised strong objections with the International Cricket Council (ICC) over the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) plans to promote the Champions Trophy by conducting a trophy tour across regions in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK).

A day after the PCB announced the tour on social media, the BCCI secretary raised the matter with the global cricket body. "Jay Shah has objected to that tweet (post) and has criticised and condemned PCB's plan to take the trophy to PoK cities."

"He has urged the ICC to take strong action in this regard. The PCB has no business sharing the schedule because it has to come from ICC. Things need to be done via appropriate channels," said a source close to the development.

Another source said, "There is no question of approving or rejecting anything at this stage."

Discussions on the final plan for the Trophy Tour are ongoing. As always, the confirmed schedule will be announced through ICC channels.

Normally, a trophy tour is a part of the global body's promotional exercise with multiple city visits as per an arrangement with the host country.

On Thursday, the PCB announced the plan on social media, mentioning stops in Skardu, Hunza and Muzaffarabad — territories in PoK. "Get ready, Pakistan! The ICC Champions Trophy 2025 trophy tour kicks off in Islamabad on 16 Nov, also visiting scenic travel destinations like Skardu, Murree, Hunza and Muzaffarabad. Catch a glimpse of the trophy Sarfaraz Ahmed lifted in 2017 at the Oval," the post read.

India has already refused to play its Champions Trophy matches in Pakistan. While the ICC was expected to release the tournament schedule on Nov 11, the announcement has reportedly been postponed to Nov 22.

Meanwhile, the PCB has rejected the proposed 'hybrid model', which would see India playing their matches in Dubai. It remains unclear if the BCCI is open to playing matches in Dubai.

India 'A' plan revival on the cards

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New Delhi: The Test series defeat to New Zealand on home soil has prompted the Indian cricket board (BCCI) to make efforts to revive the robust 'A' programme to groom bench strength for the top tier Indian team.

National Cricket Academy (NCA) head VVS Laxman is working on a plan to create a player resource pool. TOI has learnt. The 'A' programme was a very dynamic initiative under previous NCA head Rahul Dravid, who used to tour with developmental teams round the year.

The 'A' programme suffered after the Covid-19 lockdown because boards of other countries refused

to bear the expense of hosting India's U-19 and 'A' teams, a BCCI source said.

"Other boards have communicated to the BCCI that they can't bear the expenses of an 'A' tour. The BCCI has still tried to organize a couple of shadow 'A' tours like the one which precedes India's Test tour of Australia. Laxman is working on it to come up with a plan that will offer greater exposure to the next generation of cricketers," a source said.

"Other boards are reluctant to host these 'A' series, which don't generate any revenue for them. The expenses must be borne by the local board. What needs to be worked out is a way to make these tours affordable."

"Earlier this year, there was an 'A' series against England Lions just ahead of England's tour of India. That series offered the selectors a good perspective on where the players stand. The board also needs to see that Emerging tournaments and other series where two India teams are on separate tours don't coincide with the Ranji Trophy. Almost 60 players are busy on such assignments this season and that hampers the quality of Ranji," the source said.

The impact of the 'A' programme was on view during the last tour of Australia as the likes of Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Navdeep Saini and Washington Sundar stepped up in the absence of seniors.

RAHUL STRUCK ON ELBOW, KOHLI GOES FOR SCANS

Melbourne: India opener KL Rahul left the field after being struck on the elbow by fast-bowling teammate Prasidh Krishna in an intra-squad match in Perth on Friday, while Virat Kohli emerged to bat despite injury concerns ahead of the Tests against Australia.

Rahul was hit by a rising delivery at

the WACA and sought medical attention from staff as India's players started their three-day 'match simulation' a week out from the series-opener in Perth. He is likely to open with Yashasvi Jaiswal in the first Test should captain Rohit Sharma miss the match due to the expected arrival of his second child.

Kohli went for scans this week on an undisclosed injury. Australian media reported, but came out to bat on Friday against a team comprising India A squad members and fringe players.

Kohli's loss of form has been a major talking point in the lead-up to the five-test series following his struggles against New Zealand. The talismanic batter managed 93 runs at an average of 15.50 as India were whitewashed 3-0 by the Black Caps.

At the WACA, Kohli managed 15 runs before nicking seamer Mukesh Kumar to the slips. Under pressure to rebound in Australia after the stunning New Zealand setback, India opted to prepare the series with the intra-team warm-up rather than take on a local side in a tour match. REUTERS



COPING WITH THE CONDITIONS: Virat Kohli is struck by a delivery during a practice match between India and India A at the WACA in Perth on Friday

Kamboj's perfect 10 lights up Ranji Trophy

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New Delhi: On a nippy Friday morning in Lahli, Haryana medium pacer Anshul Kamboj became the star of this season after becoming the third bowler to take all 10 wickets in an innings in the Ranji Trophy. Kamboj achieved the feat against Kerala, returning figures 10/49 after bowling 30.1 overs.

Son of a farmer from Karnal, the soon-to-be 24-year-old has already impressed national selectors. Interestingly, Kamboj has modelled his game on Glenn McGrath, who retired from the game when Kamboj was merely seven years old.

"I remember watching some of McGrath's matches on TV. When I started playing at the age of 12, I started watching a lot of his spells on YouTube. I realised the importance of bowling a consistent line and length. I was fascinated by it," Kamboj told TOI on Friday.

"I have ensured I didn't drop my studies. I am still pursuing my graduation. It helps in thinking on my toes," he added.

Former India bowling coach Paras Mhambrey, who



RARE FEAT: Haryana's Anshul Kamboj celebrates a dismissal on Friday

91

Instances of a bowler taking all 10 wickets in an innings in first-class cricket

—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

was the head coach of India U-19 team in 2019-20, recalled Kamboj as being a very steady bowler. Kamboj does not have express pace but he made full use of the historically seamer-friendly conditions in Lahli, where his support bowlers couldn't offer a breakthrough.

According to Mhambrey, Kamboj was always a good red-ball prospect. "I remember

he hit to the U-19 World Cup. But he was always a steady bowler and looked stronger for his age. He was stout and could bat well down the order," Mhambrey told TOI.

"Rahul Dravid too felt he was a better prospect in red-ball cricket because he could hit the deck hard at a back of a length and we played him in a couple of Youth Tests. It

seems he must have increased his pace now," Mhambrey said. Kamboj is growing into a role of a lead pacer as the Haryana side moves on from veterans Harshal Patel and Mohit Sharma. Kamboj used to travel and stay over in Gurgaon to learn cricket in his early days since Karnal didn't have good facilities. After having moved to Rohtak's Shri Ram Narain Cricket Club later on, he owes a lot of his success to Haryana Cricket Association (HCA) president Anirudh Chaudhary for providing him facilities to grow as a player.

"Anirudh sir arranged frequent pace-bowling camps in Rohtak during off seasons. I got to learn from Mohit bhaiya and Harshal bhaiya. My family has always been supportive. They never asked me to worry about the results," Kamboj said.

It is understood Kamboj was close to being picked for the India 'A' team which recently toured Australia. Navdeep Saini was eventually preferred ahead of him since India coach Gautam Gambhir needed more experience from the backup pacers ahead of the five-Test tour against the Aussies.

DELHI'S BADONI STANDS TALL AMIDST RUINS

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New Delhi: New captain Ayush Badoni's masterful unbeaten hundred pulled Delhi out of the doldrums as they ended Day Three of their Ranji Trophy match against Jharkhand at 238/5. Delhi are chasing Jharkhand's first-innings total of 382.

Jharkhand's Kumar Kushagra fell for 156 and the team was bowled out inside the first hour of the day. Subsequently, Delhi's batting succumbed to a familiar collapse. Delhi's only consistent batter Sanat Sangwan fell for five as his opening partner Anuj Rawat scored a sedate 52 after surviving an early chance. Soon, Delhi were reduced to 158/5 and Badoni was in danger of running out of batters at the other end.

As Sumit Mathur offered some steady resistance at the other end, Badoni upped the ante and started toying with the bowling. Badoni put on an exhibition in stroke-making and hardly looked in any kind of trouble.

later on in the day, actually made MP's job a bit difficult with his bat in the morning. The pacer, who came in to bat when Bengal were 219/8, used his long handle well to stitch together a 39-run last-wicket stand with his brother Mohammed Kaif to take Bengal's second innings total to 276.

After a brief 18-run ninth-wicket stand with SS Jaiswal, Shami decided to break free. He hit two fours and lifted Kartikeya Singh and Kulwant Khejroliya for a six each over the long-on before being dismissed for 37 that came off just 36 deliveries.

It was good to see him coming back to bowl 11 overs in the next two sessions of play. Shami's comeback has already excited cricket watchers. Bengal coach Laxmi Ratan Shukla was happy to see how Shami took up the challenge.

Now, Shami lifts Bengal with the bat

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Kolkata: Much will depend on Mohammed Shami as the Bengal and Madhya Pradesh Elite Group 'C' Ranji Trophy match is set for a thrilling finish. Chasing 338 for victory, the hosts are placed well at 150 for three at stumps on the penultimate day of the match at the Holkar Stadium in Indore on Friday. Shami, who picked up one wicket

Prajnesh, once ranked No. 75, calls it a day

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Bengaluru: Prajnesh Gunneswaran climbed to a career-best No. 75 on the ATP Rankings five years ago, in what was his second innings in tennis.

The 35-year-old, forced to listen to the rickety tunes of a creaking frame, particularly a troublesome left wrist, bid adieu to the sport on Friday. Gunneswaran made the announcement on social media, some 20-months after he played his last tournament, an ATP Challenger in Pune.

The gifted left-hander said, "I played without being able to play my intensity for a while, managing the injury, but my ranking kept dropping. The more I played, the more sure I became that I didn't want to do this in-between thing, where I was unable to raise the intensity of my play."

Gunneswaran celebrated his 35th birthday on Tuesday. "It was not a decision I made overnight," he said. "I always knew that when I decided to go, I didn't want to leave with regrets. That's why I took so much time before making the decision."

The Chennai-based pro's tennis journey has played out in two parts. Gunneswaran was ranked outside the 1500-mark at the age of 26. A series of injuries — recurring stress fracture of both knees — kept him on the sidelines. When relatively pain-free, Gunneswaran decided to get back on the road for a last dance. His father, the late SG Prabhakaran, whose deep pockets allowed his only child to return to the Tour, was his biggest cheerleader. Gunneswaran's knees held. He played one season, tried another and then another. From 1500-plus in the rankings in the summer of 2015 to a place in the world's top-75, in April 2019,



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The India No.1 enjoyed his best season that year. He started by qualifying for the main draw of the Australian Open and went on to play the main draw of the other three majors, besides making the round of 32 in Indian wells, beating the 18th ranked Nikola Pietrangeli enroute, for his best win by way of rankings. His other top-50 triumph came against Denis Shapovalov (ranked 23 at the time).

Gunneswaran has no definite plans for the future but is sure he will be involved with tennis. "All of us who have made it to this level, have had to shift out of the country to train," said Gunneswaran.

"Every country we've had in this country has had some success, from BATT — Leander Paes and Somdev Devvarman — to the other ventures. We need to do something on a big scale, so that our players do not have to go outside to train," he said. "China and Japan have been doing it for a while. Either we go their way and get the best coaches to India for a period of five-ten years or we use the players we have, put them back in the system to get results."

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| Ranji Trophy | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------------|-----------|----------|---------|---------|
| Wkts | Bowler | For | Opponent | Venue | Season |
| 10/20 | Premangsu Chatterjee | Bengal | Assam | Jorhat | 1956-57 |
| 10/49 | Anshul Kamboj | Haryana | Kerala | Rohtak | 2024-25 |
| 10/78 | Pradeep Sunderam | Rajasthan | Vidarbha | Jodhpur | 1985-86 |

| Duleep Trophy | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|----------|---------|
| 10/46 | Debasis Mohanty | East Zone | South Zone | Agartala | 2000-01 |

| Test cricket | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------|----------|-------|---------|
| 10/74 | Anil Kumble | India | Pakistan | Delhi | 1998-99 |

| First-class fixture against visiting teams | | | | | |
|--|---------------|--------|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| Wkts | Bowler | For | Opponent | Venue | Season |
| 10/78 | Subhash Gupte | Bombay | Pak Combined services & Bahawalpur XI | Mumbai (BS) | 1954-55 |

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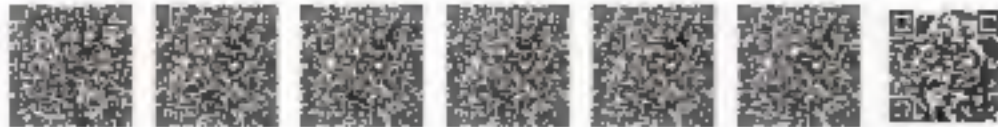
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